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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EFFECTS OF VARIOUS ARTICLES

OF THE

Materia Medica,

IN THE CURE OF

LUES VENEREA:

ILLUSTRATED WITH

CASES.

BY

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READER ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SURGERY.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. CALLOW,
CROWN COURT, PRINCES STREET, SOHO,
BY W. SMITH, NO. 49, KING STREET, SEVEN DIALS.

1800.

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TO

THOMAS FOWLER, M. D.

Late Phyſician of the General Infirmary of the County of Stafford.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE ſucceſs with which you have inveſtigated the properties and effects of ſeveral articles of the Materia Medica, has conferred on you a ſolid reputation among your contemporaries, and renders this expreſſion of reſpect to your talents peculiarly proper, from one who has been engaged in ſimilar inquiries. But, while I cheriſh a high eſtimation of your public character, it affords me a peculiar ſatisfaction to addreſs you as a friend; aſſuring you, that I feel the higheſt gratification in tracing back the various events of many ſucceeding years, by which

which our friendſhip has been more cloſely cemented, till it has acquired a vigour, which I truſt will ſuffer no abatement, and a maturity which will never know a ſymptom of decay.

That enlarged Philanthropy by which your profeſſional exertions have been actuated, during the long courſe of an uſeful life, will, I am ſure, feel leſs gratified by the moſt laboured panegyric on your various acquirements, than by a tribute paid to your ſocial virtues and your moral character.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great reſpect and regard,

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

and obedient ſervant,

JOHN PEARSON.

Golden-Square,
May 1, 1800.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE various and discordant opinions which have been adopted and disseminated by different medical writers, concerning the efficacy of several articles of the materia medica, in the venereal disease, have proved the occasion of much confusion in reasoning, and of no less instability in practice. It were desirable therefore, to attain to some degree of precision, in estimating the qualities of the mineral or vegetable productions which have been recommended for the cure of that complaint; to ascertain whether any other substance than Mercury be a true and certain antidote; and to what ends and purposes any of the numerous medicines recommended

may be employed, either in conjunction with Mercury, or after the completion of a mercurial courſe.

My principal deſign, in publiſhing the following work, is to communicate the reſult of my obſervations on theſe ſubjects, with a view of contributing my aid towards diſpelling thoſe uncertainties in which ſome important practical topics have been ſo long involved. But, previouſly to my entering upon the ſubject, I ſhall offer ſome introductory remarks, and diſplay the nature of that evidence upon which many revolutions, in the mode of treating Lues Venerea, have been either attempted or actually brought about.

2. Towards the concluſion of the fifteenth century, this new and contagious diſeaſe invaded Europe, and ſpread with uncommon rapidity through its different kingdoms; the ſymptoms which characterized it were formidable and loathſome; and its obſtinate and untractable

untractable nature, reſiſted the moſt conſummate medical ſkill of that period. The aſtoniſhment and perplexity excited by the ravages of this hitherto unknown plague, cannot be aſcribed, ſolely, to the novel or uncommon form in which the complaint ſhewed itſelf; ſince there is ſcarcely an appearance produced by Lues Venerea, which is peculiar and appropriate to that malady, and which has not occurred as a character of ſome other diſeaſe. The mode in which it was moſt commonly communicated, the unrelenting fury with which it proceeded from one order of painful and diſguſting ſymptoms to another, and, above all, the inefficacy of the ſeveral methods of treatment which were adopted by the phyſicians and ſurgeons of that period, furniſhed reaſons but too cogent, both to the patient and his medical attendant, for regarding it as one of the moſt deſtructive ſcourges that had ever viſited the human race.

3. Within a very ſhort ſpace of time after the firſt appearance of this malady, it was diſcovered that Mercury was capable of ſubduing its malignity, and of curing the effects produced by the virus; a diſcovery which, during a ſhort time, reſtrained the progreſs of the diſeaſe, and allayed the apprehenſions of the afflicted.

The phyſicians and ſurgeons of that time, were indeed very imperfectly acquainted with the hiſtory and peculiar character of Lues Venerea; and their knowledge of the powers and properties of the remedy they had acquired, was too vague and indefinite to conduct them to a ſafe and ſucceſsful method of practice. They were accuſtomed to adminiſter the ſpecific in immoderate doſes, and repeated them at too ſhort intervals; hence, by ſuddenly exciting a violent ſalivation, they ſometimes deſtroyed the unfortunate patient; and when that did not happen, they very frequently inflicted calamities on him, not infe-

rior

rior to what might have been produced by the diſeaſe they were attempting to cure.*

The medical practitioners of thoſe times did not poſſeſs a correct knowledge of the quantity of Mercury neceſſary to effect a radical cure; they had no diſtinct notion of

* Tandem eo incommodi res veniebat, ut dentium uſus adimeretur, ipſis vacillantibus. Os alioqui totum uno occupante ulcere, cibi appetentiam, frigefacto ſtomacho, & turbante foetore, amitterent ægri. Cumque ſitis eſſet intolerabilis, tamen, quod ad ſtomachum faceret, potionis genus nullum inveniebatur. Multis ad vertiginem, quibuſdam ad inſaniam uſque infeſtabatur cerebrum. Tremebant inde non manus tantum, ſed pedes etiam, et univerſum corpus ac lingua balbutiem trahebat, nonnullis immedicabilem. Multos in media curatione interire vidi, et quendam novi ſic medentem, qui tres una die viros agricolas, cum intra hypocauſtum plus æquo æſtuans concluſiſſet, ac illi ſalutis, quam ſic adepturos ſe ſperabant, ſtudio patientius quam par erat conſiſterent, donec defectis per caloris vehementiam cordibus, mori nou ſentirent, miſere jugulavit. Alios vidi intumeſcente ad fauces gutture, quum exitum non haberet ſanies primum, quam in ſputo dejici oportuit, deinde ipſe etiam ſpiritus ſuffocari, quoſdam cum mejere non poſſent, mori. Omnino pauci convaluerunt, atque illi hoc periculo, hac amaritudine, his malis.

Ulrichus de Hutten, de Morbo Gallico. Cap. IV.

the length of time during which its medicinal action ought to be ſupported in the animal ſyſtem; nor were they always competent to diſtinguiſh between the proper effects of the venereal poiſon, and the pernicious conſequences of an injudicious practice.

The ill ſucceſs which, in a great variety of inſtances, attended the exertions of the early practitioners, and the deplorable condition to which great numbers of their miſerable patients were reduced, by the mal-adminiſtration of this active mineral, ſoon brought their mode of treatment into diſrepute, and excited inquiries after other remedies, leſs uncertain in their ſpecific qualities, and leſs injurious to the health and comfort of the diſeaſed, in their conſequences.

As the perſuaſion that the Lues Venerea was originally imported from Hiſpaniola, in the ſhip which brought back Columbus and his companions, was generally adopted, and as it was alſo a current opinion, that this malady

malady was endemial in the Weſt-India Iſlands,* it was preſumed, that the country whence it was derived, could probably furniſh a ſafe and efficacious remedy.

4. The Lignum Sanctum, or Guaiacum Wood, was brought into Europe early in the ſixteenth century, and the Decoction of it was declared to be an infallible remedy againſt every form of Lues Venerea: nor were its advocates ſatisfied with placing it on an equality with Mercury; they averred, that this vegetable was capable of eradicating the diſeaſe, where ſucceſſive courſes of Mercury had totally failed of ſucceſs.

This new medicine was however often found to be inefficient in the cure of Lues Venerea; and the failures which occurred,

* Although this account of the origin of Lues Venerea is commonly received as authentic, yet I have, during many years, been accuſtomed to controvert the opinion, in my lectures on that ſubject; the ſubſtance of which I deſign hereafter to offer to the public, in a Treatiſe on the Lues Venerea.

were ſometimes aſcribed to the introduction of a ſpurious kind of Guaiacum Wood; at other times, to a diminution of its medicinal qualities, by keeping it too long. Theſe opinions excited many reſpectable men to enter into minute and detailed deſcriptions of the genuine Wood, the ſtate in which it ought to be uſed, and the proper mode of extracting its virtues; and not a few engaged in ſharp controverſies on topics relating to it, the greater part of which, we now conſider as frivolous, or abſurd.* It was however generally admitted, that the Wood of the young trees, when employed in a recent ſtate, had the beſt claim to confidence; hence, many diſeaſed perſons were induced to migrate to the Weſt Indies, for the expreſs purpoſe of drinking decoctions made of the freſh plant,

* Aphrodiſiacus, pſſiam.
Aſtruc on the Venereal Diſeaſe.
Demetrius Caneuarius, de Ligno Sancto Comment.

and

and of enjoying the other advantages of what was called the *Indian mode* of treatment.

The following curious narrative, will exhibit the nature of that diſcipline, which was practiſed among the rude natives of Saint Domingo.

C'eſt ſouvent par la mauvaiſe maniere d'adminiſtrer les remedes, qu'on eſt privé de leurs meilleurs effets. L'obſervation ſuivante ſur l'uſage du gayac eſt des plus intéreſſantes. Sa ſource n'eſt pas ſuſpecte; c'eſt le récit naif de deux cures, rapportées par un témoin, ſans prévention, qui n'etoit pas homme de l'Art, & qui prétendoit, ou qu'on n'apportoit pas en France le vrai gayac; ou qu'on ignoroit la méthode de s'en ſervir. Voici le fait tel qu'on le lit dans les diverſes lecons de Loys Guyon, Dolois, Sieur de la Nauche, Conſeiller du Roi en ſes Finances au Limoſin. Lyon, 1625. Livre IV. Chap. V. Page 610.

" Moi

« Moi étant à Paris, l'an 1563, j'avois « grande familiarité avec deux jeunes Adole- « ſcences, enfans de ladite Ville, tous deux « de bonnes & illuſtres maiſons, deſquels je « tairai les noms, qui ſe trouverent infectés « de cette contagion vénérienne, parce que « le plus ſouvent elle ſe prend par paillardiſe, « acte déſhonnête, & par conſéquent honteuſe, « laquelle ils celerent tant de temps qu'ils « purent.

« Enfin la maladie ſe fit connoître par la « pélade, par puſtules rouges qui leur vinrent « au front, douleurs au milieu des os, tant « des bras, jambes, cuiſſes, epaules, que ſur « le devant de la tête, les nuits juſqu'á « environ l'aube du jour, & autres ſignes, « comme la douleur au goſier, ne pouvant « bien avaler la viande. Les parens les « mirent entre les mains de Médecins & de « Chirurgiens bien expérimentés, qui y firent « tout ce que l'Art permettoit : mais ils ne « guérirent pourtant. Pour la ſeconde fois,

« furent

" furent appellés d'autres Médecins à cette
" cure, qui y appliquerent tout leur ſçavoir,
" mais en vain : & au contraire cette maladie
" s'empiroit, & ſe faiſoit des tophes & nodo-
" ſités á la partie antérieure de leur tête,
" & aux os des bras, cuiſſes & jambes,
" avec douleurs nocturnes inſupportables : &
" comme la nuit s'approchoit, & durant icelle,
" crioient & ſé plaignoient inceſſamment, tant
" que les voiſins les entendoient ſe lamenter
" de tous côtés, á cauſe de quoi, leurs corps
" devinrent ſecs ; ces deux jeunes hommes
" étoient de complexion différent, & avoient
" neanmoins les mêmes ſymptomes, ce que
" les Médecins jugeoient être fort extraor-
" dinaire.

" Enfin, ces adoleſcens aprés avoir beaucoup
" ſouffert de maux de peines & d'angoiſſes,
" tant par les Médecins & Chirurgiens, que
" par empyriques qui les avoient gouvernés,
" que du propre mal ; aprés avoir fait beau-
" coup de dépenſes, & ennuyé leurs parens,

" furent

« furent laiſſés comme incurables, & en état « de ne pouvoir jamais plus vivre ſainement, « & euſſent fort déſiré que la mort les eût « ſaiſis. Les choſes étant en tels termes, « Dieu eut compaſſion d'eux & de leur « parens. Le Sieur de Chantonnay, gentil- « homme Bourguignon, de la Franche-Comté, « fut envoyé par le Roi d'Eſpagne en « Ambaſſade par devers Charles IX. Roi de « France, qui lors ſe tenoit ordinairement á « Paris ; ledit Ambaſſadeur, qui fut informé « du cas de ces jeunes gens, dit qu'il « avoit vû en Bourgogne, en Allemagne, en « Flandre, en Italie, & en Eſpagne, pluſieurs « vérolés qui avoient été traités inefficacement, « & qui avoient été chercher leur guériſon « radicale en Amérique, & allegua ſpéciale- « ment l'exemple d'un ſien Secrétaire.

« D'après cet avis, ils allerent s'embarquer « en Eſpagne, pour paſſer á l'Iſle de Saint « Domingue.

« Là

" Là les Médecins du Viceroi furent d'avis
" qu'ils paſſaſſent en une autre iſle qu'on
" appelle S. Jean au Port Riche, où les
" femmes ſont fort entendues á guérir cette
" Maladie. Voici le traitement qu'on leur
" fit dans une cabanne de ſauvage, ſous la
" direction d'une femme du pays.

" Elle caſſoit & fendoit avec ſes dents de
" petits tronçons de jeune arbre de gayac, &
" les faiſoit bouiller dans un vaiſſeau de terre
" ſans couverture. Elle leur faiſoit boire tous
" les matins une chopine de cette décoction,
" en deux ou trois fois ; puis les faiſoit pro-
" mener, exercer á l'eſcrime, ou bien alloient
" travailler à une mine d'or, qui n'était gueres
" loin du village, l'eſpace de deux heures :
" puis venoient, étant pleins de ſueur, á la
" maiſon, & changeoient ſeulement de che-
" miſe ; puis les faiſoit diner, ne buvant que
" de l'eau de pluie puiſée dans une marre.

" Sur les trois heures après midi, on leur
" faiſoit boire autant de gayac, comme au
" matin ;

" matin, & faire le meme exercice ; & ſans
" autre cérémonie ni remede, ſe trouverent
" entiérement guéris dans ſix ſemaines ; ſans
" autre inconvénient, que d'avoir les gencives
" enflées & enflammées ; ce dont ils guéri-
" rent incontinent, aprés qu'on les eut fait
" ſaigner, en les piquant en pluſieurs endroits
" avec un os de poiſſon fort pointu. Les
" nodoſités qu'ils avoient aux os diſparurent ;
" toutes les douleurs nocturnes ceſſerent dans
" quinze jours ; l'appétit leur revint ; enfin
" tous les accidens ſe diſſiperent ; ils retour-
" nerent ſains en Eſpagne, puis á Paris.
" L'un, fils de Maitre des Comptes, eſt devenu
" Officier aux Finances ; l'autre a rendu de
" grandes ſervices au Roi ès dernieres guerres
" de l'Union, dans la profeſſion des armes.
" Il faut que l'arbre ſoit jeune & tendre: on
" ne nous en apporte que du vieil." Louis, Parallele des Traitemens, &c. Chap. II.

5. The experience of a few years, taught the medical practitioners of the ſixteenth century,

century, that the Lignum Guaiaci was not an infallible antidote againſt Lues Venerea; and the frequent proofs which occurred of its inſufficiency, led them to inquire after other vegetable remedies. Accordingly, about the middle of the ſame century, firſt the China Root, and then the Sarſaparilla Root, were brought into Europe, with the moſt poſitive and reſpectable atteſtations of their ſuperior efficacy in venereal complaints.

The Guaiacum Wood, however, was not abſolutely ſuperſeded by the arrival of theſe competitors; for the three vegetable ſpecifics, as they were termed, were adminiſtered, ſometimes ſeparately, and often in conjunction, to great multitudes of infected perſons; and, as the writers of that period aſſure us, with the moſt diſtinguiſhed advantage. But, although this method of treating the diſeaſe, prevailed during many years; yet the uſe of Mercury was not abſolutely laid aſide, even by thoſe who were the ſtrongeſt advocates

cates for theſe new medicines; and many eminent men, who flouriſhed at that time, were ſo far from concurring in the general opinion, reſpecting Guaiacum Wood, China Root, and Sarſaparilla Root, that they regarded them as uncertain, or even nugatory, in venereal caſes; and they inſiſted on the propriety of confiding in Mercury alone, for the radical cure of Syphilis.*

6. Amidſt the ſeveral diſcordant opinions which have been maintained and defended, concerning the moſt ſucceſsful mode of treating Lues Venerea, the fortunes of Mercury have been various and fluctuating. With a certain proportion of medical practitioners, it maintained a ſteady and undiminiſhed reputation: by many, it was diſparaged and undervalued, as a mineral poſſeſſed of no decided efficacy; and, by ſome the adminiſtration of it was exploded altogether. Even in the time

* Braſſavolus, Bayrus, Rondeletius, &c.

of

of Morgagni,* this medicine was interdicted by ſome of the moſt eminent phyſicians in Italy; and ſtrong prejudices againſt the uſe of it ſubſiſted, according to the teſtimony of Murray, ſo late as the middle of the preſent century.†

How far reaſon, or faſhion, or caprice, was predominant in conducting to ſuch a determination, I preſume not to decide: certain it is,

* Memini, cum ego adoloſcentulus Bononiam petii, uſque adeo jam deſertum utrumque Mercurii uſum, ut annis octo quos ibi medicinæ ſtudio tribui, ne unum quidem audiverim medicum, nedum viderim, alterutra ratione utentem;—Quibus igitur præſtantiſſimos illos medicos vidiſti, inquis, remediis utentes contra veneream Luem? Nimirum decoctis ſive pervulgata, idque ut plurimum ratione datis, ſive alia quam Valſalvæ, nec raro, in uſu fuiſſe, vidi.

Morgagni de ſed & Cauſis Morb. Lib. IV. Ep. 58.

† Adhucdum Florentiæ in Noſocomio incurabilium ad ſolum Guaiaci lignum & Sarſaparillæ radicem, tanquam ad ſacram anchoram medici confugiant, & in Noſocomiis Hetruriæ plurimis lege uſus Mercurii ſit interdictus.

that notwithſtanding the puny clamours of ignorance, the crafty diſcourſe of intereſted empiriciſm, and even the imperious voice of authority, Mercury continues to this day the medicine commonly employed, and alone relied on, in all truly venereal caſes. And, although there are many who pretend to exclude it from their noſtrums, yet their perfidious declarations are occaſionally betrayed by the ſalivating qualities of that mineral, which, in defiance of every diſguiſe and combination, will ſometimes appear, to the detection of the impoſtor.*

7. In aſſerting the preference due to Mercury, as an antivenereal remedy, before all

* Mr. Bromfeild, ſpeaking of theſe noſtrum-mongers, obſerves, that "many of them are happily furniſhed "with a never failing diet drink, that cures the Evil, "Leproſy, Lues, &c. and declare they never give a "grain of Mercury; yet we find by the ſtate of the "patient's mouth, or bowels, that *by accident a little of* "*the Corroſive Sublimate had ſlipped in, unknown to the* "*preparer.*"

Bromfeild on the Night-Shade, &c. P. 79.

others

others yet introduced into practice, I neither intend to deny, nor to conceal, that real inconveniencies are sometimes connected with the administration of that medicine. There are certain peculiarities of constitution, where its irritating qualities predominate over its medical ones, and where the mode of its agency seems rather calculated to distress the patient, and to injure the health, than to remove the disease for which it is exhibited: hence, it were highly desirable to acquire a medicine equally potent as an antivenereal, and not possessing certain active properties peculiar to that mineral. But this concession forms no valid objection against Mercury exclusively.

There are other articles of the materia medica, which produce ill effects on the animal system, even when administered with the utmost skill and judgment. It is sufficiently known, that Antimony, Ipecacuanha, Peruvian Bark, Opium, Digitalis, Rhubarb, Mag-

neſia, Honey, &c. when brought into conflict with certain idioſyncraſies, will excite great and ſerious miſchief; the primary and direct effect of theſe medicines, on one or more parts of the animal ſyſtem, militating abſolutely againſt their medicinal qualities. But, exceptions of this kind make no impreſſions upon the minds of conſiderate men, unfavourable to the generally acknowledged merits of theſe drugs: they note the particular inſtances, and ſubſtitute other medicines in their ſtead, which poſſeſs qualities correſponding to the indication.

The wiſh which I have expreſſed, that another medicine could be found, on which reliance could be placed, for the cure of Lues Venerea, does in no wiſe ſpring from any diſtruſt of the ſufficiency of Mercury; it originates merely from the ſame ſource which would induce me to deſire, that the means of remedying every form of human miſery, were abundantly multiplied.

I regard

I regard every effort uſed to increaſe the ſtore of uſeful medicines, as highly meritorious; and, notwithſtanding my firm perſuaſion of the ſafety, efficacy, and pre-eminency of Mercury, in all caſes truly venereal, yet I ſhould be guilty of a very perverſe and contracted mode of thinking, were I to oppoſe the introduction of another ſpecific, or cenſure the experiments made to aſcertain its intrinſic merits. Scarcely any new medicine has been propoſed during the laſt twenty years, of which I have not made ſome trial; and, ſo far am I from being diſcouraged by ill ſucceſs, that I am at this time employed in making experiments with two preparations, as unpromiſing *a priori*, in my opinion, as any that have been ever made the ſubject of inquiry.*

* Theſe are, an oxide of Copper, and an oxide of Iron. When I have aſcertained their merits, and the moſt eligible methods of preparing them, I deſign to communicate the reſult of my obſervations to the public.

There is, however, I conceive, a point beyond which experiments ought not to be urged; there are cafes where no hazard ought to be incurred, by following dubious methods of treatment, when a certain and efficient mode of practice is already well eftablifhed: much lefs is it warrantable, from the real or fuppofed difcovery of a new medicine, to attempt to explode, or even to depreciate the ufe of a remedy which has been fanctioned by the concurrent experience of three centuries.

What number of fpecific medicines may yet lie concealed among the arcana of nature, can form no proper fubject of conjecture; but, that Mercury is as indubitable a fpecific againft Lues Venerea, as any one article of the materia medica is againft any one malady, is a fact too authentic to be difputed by any who have either employment or reputation to lofe; and, as for thofe who poffefs neither, their fuffrages are not worth collecting.

When

When inquiries like thoſe which conſtitute the ſubſtance of the following work, are ſubmitted to the public, it is uſual for the authors of them to appeal to actual experiments, and to vouch for the truth of their obſervations. To thoſe who have never duly conſidered the obſtacles that impede, and the difficulties which perplex, almoſt every attempt at inveſtigations of this kind, it muſt appear extraordinary, that any perſon ſhould fail of gaining a correct knowledge of the powers and properties of medicinal ſubſtances. Yet, that men do perpetually miſcarry in their reſearches, is a fact too notorious to be controverted; and the diſagreeing reports which are uſhered ſucceſſively into the world; the diſparagement of medicines once high in celebrity, and the reſtoration of others to credit, which had been expunged, or were become obſolete; might almoſt tempt one to ſuſpect, that experiments often prove an occaſion of multiplying the avenues to error, rather than of con-

ducting to the acquiſition of truth. Let any perſon trace the viciſſitudes of fortune which have attended any one powerful inſtrument of medicine, in different countries, and at diſtinct periods of time, and he will quickly diſcover how little credit is due to many a well-told tale; he will probably be humbled and abaſhed, on detecting the ſimple credulity, the frivolous levity, or even the party ſpirit, which have in their turns uſurped the place of a fair ubiaſſed judgment, and impoſed their ſpurious offspring, in the room of a ſober and legitimate induction.*

A detailed

* Dr. Gregory, the preſent profeſſor of medicine in the Univerſity of Edinburgh, has delivered his ſentiments on this ſubject with a manly freedom, in the Introduction to his Philoſophical and Literary Eſſays. P. 94, &c.

"This kind of diſingenuity has very ſeldom been practiſed in any branch of phyſics, except in medicine; in which indeed it has long been abundantly common, and conſequently is well underſtood. It ſeems now to be pretty generally conſidered as one of thoſe peccadillos, which, like barbarous Latin, are *Medicis condonanda*; and is perhaps thought juſtifiable, on the long eſtabliſhed

medical

A detailed hiſtory of the ſeveral modes of treating Lues Venerea which have been propoſed

medical axiom, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur.* And, at any rate, great allowances are to be made for thoſe who muſt live by the follies, and fears, and vices of mankind. But I much fear that ſome of my profeſſional brethren have abuſed their privilege in this reſpect, to ſuch a degree as to make it almoſt uſeleſs. The moſt candid, and patient, and experienced phyſicians, who are ſurely the beſt and only competent judges of ſuch a queſtion, have been obliged to confeſs, that great numbers of our Medical Facts and Obſervations are as little to be relied on as our medical theories; and leſs they cannot be. In a neighbouring country the ſame remark has been ſo generally made, and is ſo well confirmed, as to be expreſſed in the form of a proverb, *Grand observateur, grand menteur*; which my late venerable colleague and preceptor in medicine, Dr. Cullen, whoſe long and extenſive experience had fully taught him the truth of it, uſed frequently to quote to his pupils, with great acrimony. I much fear the French proverb will ſoon be tranſlated, and naturalized in this iſland; and that in a few years a book of Medical Obſervations will be of as little value or authority, as an equal number of medical advertiſements and certificates, ſelected from the London newſpapers."

"When either phyſicians or metaphyſicians were diſpoſed to act diſingenuouſly in the account which they gave

poſed at different periods of time, would furniſh an ample illuſtration of theſe remarks; ſince almoſt every kind of vegetable and mineral production, even the Bark of Saſſafras and the Balſam of Sulphur,* two of the moſt inert ſubſtances in nature, have been celebrated as antidotes, and have obtained atteſted records in their favour. Indeed ſome learned and reſpectable writers have proceeded ſo far as to aver, that the venereal diſeaſe may be cured without the aid of medicine; and they pretend to prove, that certain changes of the climate, various modes of exerciſe, parti-

gave of their own obſervations, they would be encouraged to do ſo by the evident difficulty, or in many caſes the ſeeming impoſſibility, of detecting any falſity in the account which they gave of their own thoughts and their own obſervations."

"Metaphyſicians could ſcarce have any other motive but mere vanity for acting in ſuch a manner: Phyſicians would have that and more, for not only empty praiſe, but much ſolid pudding, may be earned by aſſuming the character of a great diſcoverer, and obſerver, and improver in medicine."

* Rulandi Obſerv. Medicinal.

cular

cular forms of diet, the ſupervention of ſome acute diſeaſes, and even the powers of reſtitution naturally inherent in the animal ſyſtem have each of them been equal to the eliminating of this virus, and reſtoring the infected perſon to a ſtate of ſoundneſs. I ſhall ſtate ſome of the evidence which they adduce, in confirmation of theſe ſingular propoſitions, and offer my obſervations upon it.

8. The phyſicians and ſurgeons who flouriſhed at an early period after the firſt appearance of Lues Venerea, had conſtant opportunities of obſerving, that their patients acquired very decided advantages from a copious and long continued perſpiration. All the arrangements which they annexed to the adminiſtration of the Decoction of Guaiacum, were calculated to promote that effect; and they likewiſe employed Fumigations with Spirit of Wine, the Hot Bath, the Vapour Bath, Sweating Chairs, and violent Exerciſe, with a ſimilar intention.

It

It appears probable, that theſe ſeveral modes of attaining one and the ſame end, were adopted with the deſign of increaſing the momentum of the blood, of liquefying the virus, and of exciting a depuratory fever, by which the morbid matter ſhould be diſcharged by the ſkin: for, as medicine was chiefly Galenical, its profeſſors very conſiſtently expected more beneficial effects from a regular ſyſtematic courſe of evacuation, than from the more obſcure agency of ſpecific remedies.*

* Ambroſe Parè taught that Guaiacum could not cure the venereal diſeaſe, and gave a decided preference to mercurial frictions, above any other mode of treating it; yet, he regarded Mercury as bringing on a criſis, and effecting a cure, by the evacuations which it promoted, rather than by any other quality.

Par art & ayde des medicamens, ſe procure une criſe, par le moyen de laquelle, nature aydée, & dominatrice, expelle & chaſſe le venin par les evacuations ſuſdites; de ſorte qu'eſtant la criſe parfaicte, il s'enſuit vraye & entiere curation.

Les Oeuvres D'Ambroiſe Parè. P. 451.

That

That certain advantages may be obtained by a ſudorific plan of treatment, is an opinion which has been ſo long prevalent, and is ſo widely diffuſed, that it would argue a moſt unreaſonable ſhare of ſcepticiſm, to reject indiſcriminately all that has been offered upon the ſubject. M. Louis, who was a cautious and enlightened obſerver, entertained a very favourable opinion of the efficacy of ſudorifics; for he has aſſerted, that the methodic uſe of ſuch medicines, would radically cure erratic pains, derived from a venereal infection;* this however, I conceive, ought only to be underſtood as implying, that when the venereal virus is ſubdued, ſudorifics often prove beneficial in removing thoſe ſymptoms for the cure of which the farther uſe of Mercury is not adapted. But, although the application of heat and moiſture, and the adminiſtration of diaphoretic medicines, have been uſeful under the direction of prudent men, yet

* Parallele des Traitemens, &c. P. 60.

they

they have been too often groſsly miſapplied; and the general principle which actuated medical men to employ them, has been frequently urged to a moſt culpable exceſs; inſomuch, that they have produced the laſt ſtage of weakneſs and extenuation.*

It may be farther obſerved, that a ſtrong perſuaſion of the extraordinary efficacy of this mode of treatment, has given occaſion to the moſt whimſical and ridiculous practices, of which the following narratives afford a curious illuſtration.

Scatebat quidem è grege mendicabulorum Lue Venereâ, aliquot diebus univerſum corpus fimo equino obruit, ut tantum eſſet, qua reſpiraret. Erat ſtercus ſtabulorum equino

* Debeo hoc corpus emaciare, & omnem pinguedinem expellere.—Potus eſto aqua, vel ſerum lactis tenuiſſimum, nec alius, exercitatio corporis maxima, quotidiana, continuata cum taedio ad ſudores uſque, nam vis vitæ debet eſſe tanta, ut omne oleum conſumat, nec permittat novum generari.

Herm. Boerhaave, Prælect. Academ. de Lue Venerea. P. 342.

lotio

lotio ſaepiùs perfuſum, quodque jam computruerat. Effecit ille hâc arte, ut totum virum exprimeret: addidit aliquoties euporiſtum, ex axungiâ, larignâ, & hydrargyro. Nec alia vitæ lex ſervata eſt, quam mantica offerebat: atque his remediis curatus eſt.*

A treatment ſtill more diſguſting, was practiſed in Perſia, according to the teſtimony of M. Sanchez. J'ai appriz en Ruſſie, des perſonnes dignes de foi, que les Perſans ſe guériſſent de la maladie vénérienne, de la maniere ſuivante: le malade ſe met tout nud dans une Latrine, juſqù au col, avec une eſpèce de chapeau ſur la tête, afin que la vapeur des matières échauffe la reſpiration & toute la tête. On lui fait prendre des liquides ſeulement pendant 21 jours, qu'il y reſte. Il y dort, & au bout de ce tems, il ſort parfaitement guéri, & ſon corps renouvellé.†

* Sylloges Memorab. Medicinæ. J. R. Camerarii. Cent. IX. Hiſt. LXXV.

† Obſerv. ſur les Malad. Vénériennes.

M. Peyrilhe, adduces this fact as an evidence in favour of the antivenereal powers of the Volatile Alkali ;* but I am diſpoſed rather to regard it as a very extraordinary mode of conducting the ſudorific proceſs, and this opinion derives confirmation from the following remarks of Kempe. Optima ejectio, mea quidem ſententia, eſt lenis ſudor ; experientia enim docet, multos aegrotos in calidis terris, uſu ſudoriferorum potuum ſanatos eſſe. In Hungaria ſunt montium cavernae, in quibus homines venerei aliquot dies deliteſcere ſolent, ſudant ibi et levamem ſymptomatum ſuorum perſentiſcunt. In Polonia, ſingularem quandam a Lue Venerea ſudando ſe liberandi methodum eſſe ferunt, ſcilicet aegroti quotidie aliquot horas in calidum equorum ſtercus ſe ingerunt; durante hac curatione tenuia et pauca cibaria ſumunt, quam diætam quatuor ſeptimanas continuant, et dicuntur aegroti a

* Eſſai ſur la vertu Anti-Venerienne des Alkalis Volatils. Chap. IV.

lue

lue eſſe liberati. Poſtea etiam noctu in lectis vehementer ſudare, mihi relatum eſt.*

I preſume, few perſons could be found in this country, who would ſubmit to theſe offenſive and ridiculous practices; nor would any man of credit in his profeſſion, hazard his own reputation, and his patients ſafety, by employing diaphoretics alone in the treatment of the venereal diſeaſe: yet it muſt be allowed, that the evidence in favour of the efficacy of that claſs of medicines, far exceeds that which accompanies any of the modern remedies propoſed as ſubſtitutes for Mercury. I have, however, repeatedly tried the full effects of ſudorific medicines, aided by hot baths, but without curing one patient by them; and I have known, in ſeveral inſtances where the venereal diſeaſe has been miſtaken for Rheumatiſm, that a courſe of hot ſea bathing, and of the Bath waters, have been preſcribed with-

* Spicelegia quædam ad Curat. Luis Venereae, &c. J. F. Kempe. P. 22.

out the leaſt advantage. Indeed, in all the caſes which have fallen under my notice, where the Bath waters have been uſed, the diſeaſe has been uniformly aggravated.

9. That the ſecondary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea do not proceed with equal rapidity to the deſtruction of health, or life, in hot climates, as in cold ones, is I conceive generally allowed, by thoſe who have enjoyed favourable opportunities of making a compariſon. The diſeaſe is likewiſe uſually attended with fewer inconveniencies in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the ſouthern parts of France, than it is in this kingdom; and, as far as I can rely upon the teſtimony of various perſons with whom I have converſed on the ſubject, a ſmaller quantity of Mercury, and a ſhorter period of time, are ſufficient for the curing of it. I have likewiſe had ſome opportunities of obſerving, that perſons migrating from this country into a warmer region, with Lues Venerea in their conſtitution, have paſſed many

many months there, without ſuffering ſo much diſturbance from the diſeaſe, as to induce them to ſeek for medical aſſiſtance: but, immediately after their return to England, the virus has proceeded in its ravages with renewed activity.

Within the laſt one hundred and fifty years, many of our nobility and gentry were accuſtomed to paſs over to France, when afflicted with ſecondary ſymptoms, from a perſuaſion, that they could obtain a more expeditious and radical cure in that kingdom; and Sydenham, unwilling to admit that the phyſicians of that nation were poſſeſſed of ſuperior ſkill in treating the diſeaſe, aſcribes their pre-eminent ſucceſs to the greater comparative purity of the French climate.*

That very ſalutary effects might be expected from a change of climate, was taught

* Hujuſmodi ægris, œconomiâ illorum corporum everſâ ac viribus proſtratis, apud nos aër craſſus ac humidus reſarciendis minus idoneus eſt, cum iſte Galliæ, utpotè qui ſalubrior ac magis ſerenus, ſpiritus corporis & vires deperditas inſtaurare aptus ſit, &c. Sydenham. Opuſc. P. 405.

early in the ſixteenth century, by an author, who declares, that he was often an eye-witneſs of the cure of the diſeaſe from that circumſtance alone, without the aid of any medicine. Si quis apud Barbaros eo morbo inficiatur, qui gallicus vulgò dici ſolet, raro aut nunquam priſtinæ redditur ſanitati, quin mors tandem inde conſequatur. Solet autem hic morbus quodam dolore ac tumore primum prorepere, ac tandem in ulcera verti. Paucis admodum toto Atlante, tota Numidia, totaque Libya, hoc notum eſt contagium. Quod ſi quiſquam fuerit qui ſe eo infectum ſentiat, mox in Numidiam, aut in Nigritarum regionem proficiſcitur, cujus tanta eſt aeris temperies, ut optimæ ſanitati reſtitutus inde in patriam redeat: quod quidem multis accidiſſe ipſe meis vidi oculis, qui nullo adhibito neque Pharmaco neque Medico, præter ſaluberrimam jam dictum aerem, revaluerant.*

* Joannis Leonis Africani. de totius Africæ deſcriptione. Lib. I. Fol. 33. Ant. 1556.

The

The influence of the air on venereal patients was an object of attention to Gabriel Fallopius: he ſeems indeed to have conſidered the agency of climate, as principally efficient in modifying the form or violence of the ſymptoms; yet he is poſitive that advantage, or detriment, is connected with the temperature of the atmoſphere. Ideo poſſum monere vos, ut ſi amicus inficitur Gallico, & fuerit in aëre frigidiori & tenuiori, moneatis, ut eat ad craſſiorem et calidiorem, ſaluberrimum tamen.*

Vercellonus is ſtill more explicit in expreſſing the beneficial influence of a warm climate, both in mitigating the ſymptoms, and retarding the progreſs of the diſeaſe.— Patet proinde morbum hunc in calidis regionibus minus ſævire, quam in frigidis, atque Indos iccirco, quibus idem endemius & vernaculus eſt, cum ipſo ad extremum uſque ſenium perdurare.†

* De Morbo Gallico. Cap. XXXVIII. P. 703.

† De Lue Venerea. Cap. IV. P. 224.

From theſe and other teſtimonies which might be produced, if neceſſary, we may be authoriſed to believe, that the influence of a warm climate upon thoſe infected with Lues Venerea, is not inconſiderable; that it may retard the progreſs of the diſeaſe; that it may render it milder in ſome of its ſymptoms; and alſo that it may contribute to increaſe the activity and certainty with which the proper remedies operate, and thus render the patient leſs in danger of ſuffering from ſome of the ſequelæ, which often prove as troubleſome as the original complaint. It cannot however be ſuppoſed, that upon ſo ſlender a foundation as theſe facts afford, any perſon ſhould infer, that a migration near the equator, could ſuperſede the neceſſity of uſing any other mode of treatment: a concluſion of this nature would be repugnant to the conſtant experience of mankind during three centuries.

I do

I do not apprehend that, at this period of time, any perſon is in danger of being miſled by ſuch repreſentations as are contained in the foregoing pages; they may ſerve, however, to evince how eaſily men impoſe upon themſelves, in matters where even the bias of intereſt, or the eagerneſs of vanity, can ſcarcely be ſuſpected of having offered an allurement: and where, indeed, we muſt often reſolve the incorrectneſs of their information into an incontinency of diſcourſe, or a ſtrange indifference about the intereſts of truth.

10. That the venereal virus could be ſubdued, and its miſchievous effects eradicated, by a coarſe and ſimple diet, joined to laborious exerciſe, and a conſtant expoſure to all the viciſſitudes of the weather, without the aid of any medicine, was inculcated by the higheſt medical authority in the ſixteenth century, and has been repeated by various writers of eminence down to the preſent time.

Vidi ego ſæpè malum, qui jam ſudoribus omne
Finiſſet, ſylviſque luem liquiſſet in altis.
Sed nec turpe puta dextram ſummittere aratro,
Et longum trahere incurvo ſub vomere ſulcum;
Neve bidente ſolum, & duras proſcindere glebas,
Et validâ aëriam quercum exturbare bipenni,
Atque imis altam eruere ab radicibus ornum.
Quinetiam, exercere domi quo te quoque poſſis,
Parvam mane pilam verſa mihi, veſpere verſa,
Et ſaltu, et durâ potes exudare palæſtrâ.
Vince malum; nec te fallat, quòd deſidis oti
Aſſiduè deſiderium, lectique ſequetur.
Tu lecto ne crede, gravi ne crede ſopori—*

Vella, in his ſmall treatiſe on the venereal diſeaſe, ſpeaks nearly the ſame language.—Tertium problema eſt, propter quid eſt quod multi ſanati ſunt à tali ægritudine beneficio ſolius exercitii? He then offers ſuch reaſons as the theory of his own times ſuggeſted, and concludes thus:—& mihi videtur quod uſque in hodiernum diem non ſit inventa medicina ſibi compar, & hac de cauſa ruſtici laborantes facile ſanantur, quare Virgilianum illud non fuit vane dictum, 1 Georg. 145.

* Syphilis. Fracaſtorii. Lib. ii.

labor

labor omnia vincit
Improbus, & duris urgens in rebus egeſtas.*

Gabriel Fallopius has written a ſhort chapter on the advantages of exerciſe in venereal complaints; and, in a ſubſequent one, entitled De Vero Antidoto, he delivers the following narrative: Ego vidi aliquos curatos ligno fagi, qui conjecti in triremes, atque inſtituta victus ratione tenuiſſima, laborantes, ex toto liberantur: ſed iſte non eſt uſus medicus.†

Francantianus is equally explicit with his predeceſſors, in favour of ſtrong exerciſe:— Alia vero eſt curandi ratio per continuata exercitia, & vehementiora, quae tum inſenſibiliter, tum etiam ſenſibiliter, per ſudoris evacuare poſſint.‡

Tomitanus aſſents to the truth of theſe repreſentations, but diſapproves of the practice, becauſe it is attended with ſome hazard to the patient.

* Georgii Vellæ Opuſculum. Cap. IV.

† De Morbo Gallico. Cap. XXXVII.

‡ Ant. Francant. de Morbo Gallico Liber.

But

But, not to multiply quotations from the older writers, I ſhall conclude with the following teſtimony from Proſper Borgarutius. Unde tanti etiam facio exercitium in omni morbo Gallico homine affecto, cum ſcilicet moderata aliqua menſura, ut multos hac tantum ratione liberos evaſiſſe proſpexerim: quemadmodum ex quamplurimis militiam exercentibus videre licet, qui quamquam facillime hanc pravam veneream luem percipiant, eam nihilominus exercitio quodam expellunt omnino, vel ſaltem ita humiliant, ut vix actiones corum lædat.*

Among the modern writers who have contended for the utility of this mode of treatment, I ſhall firſt cite the opinion of Ramazzini:—Si tamen bonos, & ingenuos practicos conſulamus, nullum profecto fore exiſtimo, qui ultro non fateatur, felicius ſanari hunc morbum in populari & ruſticana gente, quam in divitibus & nobilibus viris. Sæpe-

* De Morbo Gallico Methodus. Cap. XI.

numero,

numero, præmiſſa purgatione ſimplici, Guaiaci decoctione lues illa abſtergitur, & ſi quod reliquum eſt virulentiæ, dum ad ſolita exercitia ablegantur, quando ſola exercitatio, ſed valida & continuata, primis illis temporibus, hujuſce morbi, Fallopio teſte, ſingulare erat remedium, facile excutitur.—Sic olim Dorias, celeberrimus ille claſſium ductor, remiges ſuos, quotiescumque gallico morbo laborarent, integri remi faginei decocto, & ſolita remigationis exercitatione ſub dio; & in medio mari ad ſanitatem deducebat.*

Vercellonus confirms the ſame notion:—Narrat Emanuel Aranda, uti miles ſibi perſpectus Algerii ex uſu egregii hujuſce medicamenti, (Vinum Meracius) & ex laboribus, quos in triremibus perduraverat, à tam truculento morbo incolumis evaſerat.†

The learned Baron van Swieten ſeems to have entertained no doubt of the fidelity of ſuch

* Opera Omnia. Tom. I. Orat. 3.

† De Lue Venerea. P. 257.

repreſentations

repreſentations; he even ſupports them by adopting the ſame opinion. It is alſo remarkable, that the only reflection which he offers on the account given by Fallopius,* is the following: Niſi enim dura cogat neceſſitas, vix invenientur aegri, qui calamitoſam adeo vitam ducere velint, ut a foedo morbo liberentur.—He then proceeds to give the following narrative, as an additional confirmation of the power of diet, exerciſe, and hardſhip, to cure the venereal diſeaſe. Vidi ipſe memorabilem caſum, qui me docuit, quid conſtans aegri animus, cum victu penitus macilento, ac validorum laborum tolerantia, efficere poſſit in Lue Venerea inveterata, & vix non deſperata. Nobilis juvenis petabat a me conſilium, qui in calamitoſiſſimo ſtatu verſabatur. Quater ſalivationem mercurialem ſubiverat, ſemper poſtea repullulante Lue Venerea, quae ſanata credebatur. Ter tentata fuerat cura per decoctum Guaiaci; nec meliori ſucceſſu. Gerebat in ſterno, ac claviculis, tumores, in fronte

* P. xii.

fronte ſimilem unicum; cutis in variis locis maculis foeda erat; & dolores nocturnos oſſium patiebatur. Omnium rerum inops cum eſſet, nemo illum recipere volebat, aut curam ejus gerere; univerſa familia deteſtabatur miſerum. Fatebatur ſe non ſemel cogitaſſe, ut violenta morte miſeriarum finem quaereret.

Moerentem animum erexi, lenimen malorum promittens, dum integram curam ſpondere non audebam in morbo adeo inveterato. Fidem dabat, ſe omnia tentare velle, & poſſe, etiam duriſſima, modo aliqua ſanationis ſpes affulgeret. Cum ſatis robuſta eſſet nativa corporis compages, & adeſſet aetatis vigor, ruſtica veſte indutum hominem elocavi agricolae, ut, abſque ulla duri laboris mercede, famulum ageret, ſolo victu contentus, & vili quidem. Praeter panem enim, alebatur dauci & paſtinacae radicibus, ſolani eſculenti tuberibus, pomis, pyris, hordeo, avena, in ſola aqua coctis, & ſimilibus. Potus erat lactis ebutyrati

cbutyrati ſerum acidulum, tenuiſſimum. Menſis Aprilis initio incepit hoc vitae genus, & duros ruris labores conſtantiſſime tulit uſque ad menſis Octobris initium, quando me acceſſit ſanus. Toto hoc tempore, a carnibus, piſcibus, ovis, lacte, butyro, caſeo, abſtinuit feveriſſime. Vidi illum, poſt aliquot annos, in foecundo conjugio viventem, & formoſa ſanaque prole beatum.

Mirum certe exemplum, quod docet, Venereum contagium elui potuiſſe ex locis corporis, quibus pertinaciter haerebat, & expelli de corpore, per ſudores, validis laboribus in calido aëre excitatos, dum ſimul diaeta macilentiſſima ſervabatur, et copioſus liquidi ſolventis potus ſudori aptum vehiculum praebebat. Rari tamen ſunt qui poſſent, rariores qui vellent, conſtanti animo hanc curandi methodum tolerare.*

* Comment. in Herm. Boerhaave Aphoriſmos. Tom. V. § 1478.

11. But

11. But, if credit may be given to men of eminence in the profeſſion, this rigorous courſe of diſcipline is not indiſpenſably neceſſary; for, according to Thierry de Hery, Nic. de Blegny, Vercellonus, Peyrilhe, and others, the diſeaſe may terminate by a natural criſis, and is ſuſceptible of a ſpontaneous cure. A deciſion ſo extraordinary as this, does not reſtrict the efficacy of nature to the curing of a Gonorrhœa, or the removal of the primary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea, but extends her ſanative powers to the eradicating of every form of ſecondary ſymptoms.

I need not undertake at this day to prove, that the whole of this ſtatement about the efficacy of regimen, and the doctrine of a natural criſis, has no foundation in truth and reality, and that it has originated in miſtaking the ſequelæ of Lues Venerea, and the effects of Mercury, in a bad habit of body, for genuine venereal ſymptoms; nevertheleſs, in rejecting the above concluſions, we need by no means to impeach

impeach the rectitude of intention of thoſe who made them. They had obſerved, that ulcers often continued open on the penis, and that large, ſpreading, untractable ſores remained in the groin, during many months after the patient had undergone a full and deciſive courſe of Mercury; and they had found, that ulcers of this deſcription were commonly exaſperated by the farther introduction of Mercury into the circulation. Hence they concluded, that theſe were venereal ſymptoms, which the mineral ſpecific was unable to cure. And, when it was known, that a reſidence in the country, a plain diet, and rural exerciſes and occupations, were frequently beneficial to ſuch patients, the advantages derived thence, were aſcribed to the peculiar effects of the regimen on the venereal virus, and not to the change produced in the conſtitution.

The venereal virus, when introduced into the ſyſtem, often gives riſe to morbid appearances which do not in any proper ſenſe

partake

partake of the nature of the remote cauſe; and even ſymptoms originally venereal may loſe that character, by the proper uſe of Mercury, while, to the eye of a common obſerver, they ſeem not to have undergone any favourable alteration. Theſe facts may be illuſtrated, by what occurs daily in the Small-pox, Meaſles, &c. where eruptions, tubercles, abſceſſes, phthifical ſymptoms, and other forms of diſeaſe, ſupervene on the diſappearance of the former complaints; yet no medical practitioner ever regards the latter as having any thing variolous or morbillous in their eſſential properties. No man finds any difficulty in diſtinguiſhing between the primary diſeaſe, and the ſequelæ, in the inſtances now adduced; yet, in the venereal diſeaſe, the diſtinction has been too commonly overlooked; and to this want of diſcrimination may be traced many of thoſe incorrect and marvellous narratives, which, while they detract from the reputation of the hiſtorian, reflect ſome diſgrace on the

whole profeſſion. But, as a more direct reply to the repreſentations made upon this ſubject, I would urge, that if expoſure to hardſhip in all the viciſſitudes of temperature; if hard fare, exceſſive labour, and the complicated evils attendant on poverty, can certainly deſtroy the activity of the venereal poiſon, and remedy its effects, whence does it ariſe, that no deſcription of people, in any climate, are exempted from the neceſſity of having recourſe to medicine? The German peaſant, the Ruſſian boor, the temperate Hindoo, the inhabitants of the South Sea Iſlands, the wretched Africans enſlaved in our Weſt India Iſlands, will no doubt furniſh us with abundant inſtances, where the requiſites of expoſure to the extremes of heat and cold, of ſcanty allowance, and exceſſive fatigue, may be all found, in their full meaſure; yet no proofs can be brought, that the powers of the conſtitution, aided by this ſort of diſcipline, did ever effect the cure of the diſeaſe, without the intervention of medical aſſiſtance.

12. Information

12. Information concerning the efficacy of any particular mode of treatment, ought never to be conveyed to the public in the form of general, unqualified and poſitive declarations, until confirmed by experiments made upon a large ſcale, and ſanctioned by time and the concurring teſtimony of others. Where precautions of this nature are ſlighted and neglected, the records of medicine will be perverted from their principal deſign, and prove but too often the repoſitories of miſconception and error.

I preſume that no well-informed man gives credit to a ſingle aſſertion that has been made, by the writers quoted in the foregoing pages, concerning the extraordinary agency of ſudorifics, of change of climate, of regimen, or of natural criſes, in curing the venereal diſeaſe; yet all theſe vague and unſatisfactory narratives and ſentiments, have been copied, or referred to, by a number of ſucceeding authors, without any expreſſions of diſapprobation annexed

nexed to them. It is greatly to be regretted, that men truly learned and deſervedly eminent, have been ſo frequently ſeduced into a concurrence with opinions which they never fairly examined, and have given an avowed, or at leaſt a tacit aſſent, to practices of the merit of which they were not competent to judge.

This unwary mode of proceeding is certainly reprehenſible in all caſes; but eſpecially where the health and lives of mankind are ſo nearly concerned; and the laws of ſtrict integrity require, that the hiſtory of diſeaſes, and the effects of remedies, ſhould be recorded with the ſame ſacred regard to truth and correctneſs, with which all teſtimony ought to be delivered in a court of judicature.

No men are ſo prone to indulge in fanciful ſpeculations, as thoſe that are without practice; for, having little occaſion to bring their notions to the teſt of actual experience, they proceed boldly in forming ſplendid and attractive

tractive theories, without the leaſt fear of thoſe conſequences, which would be apprehended by men of an eſtabliſhed reputation, and long experience. A man ſhould be endowed with a lively genius, a comprehenſive mind, and a talent for diſcerning the relations of things, in all the various diviſions of the ſcale, and of combining them into a regular, uniform, and coherent ſtructure, in order to model hypotheſes with tolerable ſucceſs; whereas the licentious indulgence of a vigorous fancy, may prove extremely incommodious to a mere narrator of facts, whoſe office it is to communicate what he knows, with plainneſs and ſimplicity; where patience and ſagacity in obſerving the order and method of nature, a clearneſs of conception, and, above all, an inflexible fidelity, are requiſites without which the moſt ſhining qualities are of no value.

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CHAPTER I.

Of the LIGNUM GUAIACI.

THE Guaiacum Wood was firſt employed by the natives of Saint Domingo, as an antidote againſt the Lues Venerea; the Spaniards ſoon acquired a knowledge of its virtues, and introduced it into Spain as early as the year 1508. The fame of this new remedy was diffuſed with ſuch celerity through the other parts of Europe, that, according to the teſtimony of Nicholas Poll, more than three thouſand diſeaſed perſons had derived permanent benefit from the uſe of it, before the year 1517.*

* Aphrodiſiacus Aloys. Luiſini. Ed. Lugd. 1738. Frampton's Joyful news from the new found world.

A decoction of this wood, made with water, and ſometimes with wine,* was adminiſtered under every form, and during every period, of the diſeaſe; the phyſicians directing at the ſame time purgative medicines, at proper intervals; confinement to the houſe; vapour baths; and an appropriate courſe of diet, which was commonly dictated with a tedious exactneſs, bearing the ſignature of ſuperſtition, rather than that of medical ſcience.† This proceſs, continued during ſix weeks, and often for a longer time, with ſuch occaſional variations as new circumſtances might ſuggeſt, was long regarded as the moſt ſafe and efficacious mode of treating patients afflicted with Syphilis.

The advantages which were connected with this method of cure, were ſo commonly believed and acknowledged, that during a conſiderable period of time, the exhibiting of mercury was not only diſcontinued, but the practice was publicly cenſured, as inefficacious and prejudicial. Many of the moſt eminent writers of the ſixteenth century contended,

* Lud. Septalii. Animad. Lib. VII.

† Aphrodiſiacus.

that

that Guaiacum was a true ſpecific, having the power of correcting the qualities of the venereal poiſon, and of expelling it out of the ſyſtem; and this opinion was revived and ably ſupported in the eighteenth century, by a man whoſe capacity, learning, and medical ſcience, added luſtre to the country and period in which he flouriſhed.*

Thoſe favourable reports of the virtues of Guaiacum, which maintained their credit through more than two centuries, were not founded merely on the frail baſis of partiality, or prepoſſeſſion; they were ſupported by well atteſted narratives of its good effects in great numbers of inſtances, where no mercury had been employed; or where that medicine had done no permanent good; or where the patients had ſuffered injury from it, inſtead of finding advantage. Yet, notwithſtanding the numerous and reſpectable teſtimonies which were adduced in proof of the efficacy of this vegetable, its moſt ſtrenuous advocates were obliged to confeſs, that Guaiacum was frequently adminiſtered in vain. The diſappointments which medical practitioners often

* Boerhaave, in Prefat. ad Aphrodiſiac.

experienced, when they had relied on Guaiacum alone, as a ſpecific remedy, introduced again the more frequent uſe of mercury; and, as this active medicine was ſoon employed with more caution and judgment than formerly, a very important and ſalutary change in the mode of treating lues venerea was conſequently eſtabliſhed. Nevertheleſs, ſo firmly were the generality of phyſicians perſuaded of the antivenereal virtues of Guaiacum, that the ſame men who contended for the neceſſity of a mercurial ſalivation, maintained that this vegetable was not a leſs real, though not quite ſo potent an antidote.*

When I was entruſted with the care and management of the Lock Hoſpital, in 1781, I obſerved, that Mr. Bromfeild and Mr. Williams had been long accuſtomed to repoſe great confidence in the medicinal powers of a decoction of the Guaiacum wood; and that a method ſomewhat ſimilar to that propoſed by Ulric Hutten, and ſtrongly recommended by Boerhaave, had been adopted in the hoſ-

* Braſſavolus, Fallopius, &c.

pital

pital during many years.* The patients for whom the Guaiacum was directed, were thoſe who had previouſly uſed the uſual quantity of mercury; but who complained of nocturnal pains; who had gummata, nodes, ozaena, and ſuch other effects of the venereal virus, connected with ſecondary ſymptoms, as did not yield to a courſe of mercurial frictions. The diet of theſe patients conſiſted of raiſins and hard biſcuit; they drank from two to four pints of the decoction of Guaiacum every day; they were ordered to uſe the hot bath twice in the week; and they commonly took a doſe of antimonial wine and laudanum, or of Dover's powder, every evening.

It was not thought neceſſary, however, to confine ſuch patients conſtantly to their beds; and they were ſeldom expoſed to the vapour of burning ſpirit to excite perſpiration; for it was deemed ſufficient to produce and ſupport a moiſt ſtate of the ſkin, without urging the proceſs ſo far as to occaſion profuſe ſweating. This plan of treatment was ſometimes

* Ulrichi de Hutten, De Morbi Gallici curatione per adminiſtrationem Ligni Guaiaci.

Boerhaave Aphrod. in Prefat.

of ſingular advantage to thoſe whoſe health had ſuſtained injury, from the complicated operation of the diſeaſe, combined with confinement, and a long courſe of mercury. The breaches made in the conſtitution were repaired; the ſtrength was recruited; untractable ulcers were frequently healed; carious bones exfoliated; and thoſe anomalous ſymptoms which would have been exaſperated by mercury, yielded readily to the decoction of Guaiacum.

In tracing carefully the hiſtory of this once celebrated remedy, nothing can be more evident than this, that it was adminiſtered to perſons afflicted with very different forms of diſeaſe. One numerous claſs of patients conſiſted of thoſe who, having uſed mercury according to the ſevere and often injudicious mode which was practiſed two centuries ago, found themſelves harraſſed with pains, nodes, ulcers, and ſeveral other ſymptoms, from which they were finally relieved by a courſe of Guaiacum: hence it was concluded, that this medicine was ſuperior, as an antidote, to mercury. Another claſs adopted the Guaiacum courſe from the firſt attack of their diſeaſe; and, deriving ſenſible benefit, they haſtily preſumed that a cure was accompliſhed; but, although

though their frequent relapſes might have ſhaken their confidence, yet, as the renewal of their Guaiacum courſe mitigated the violence of their ſymptoms, and often produced conſiderable appearances of amendment, they preferred this palliative method of proceeding, to the more diſtreſſing concomitants of a courſe of mercury.

In addition to theſe obſervations, it may be farther ſuggeſted, without any violation of candour, or of reſpect to our predeceſſors, that at a time when the natural hiſtory of Lues venerea was ſo imperfectly underſtood, many morbid appearances, totally unconnected with that poiſon, were nevertheleſs referred to it; and that the cure of ſuch miſtaken ſymptoms, would contribute greatly to augment the fame of the remedy. When it is therefore conſidered, that the good effects of Guaiacum are not abſolutely confined to thoſe caſes, where a quantity of mercury ſufficient to deſtroy the ſyphilitic virus has been introduced into the ſyſtem; but that it may operate like a true antidote, ſuſpending for a time the progreſs of certain venereal ſymptoms, and removing other appearances altogether, where ſubſequent experience nevertheleſs

evinces, that the unſubdued virus yet remains active in the conſtitution; we ſhall be competent to the explaining of many of thoſe contradictory aſſertions, which abound in writers upon this ſubject.

A more enlarged and correct attention to the actual powers of this medicine, have now unequivocally proved it to be unequal to the purpoſes for which many of our predeceſſors gave it;* but no experiments which have come to my knowledge, have ſhewn it to be deſtitute of all medicinal virtue; nor ought any one, in his eagerneſs to decry it as a ſpecific remedy, deſire to have it expunged from the Materia Medica.

I now proceed to give the reſult of my own obſervations on the effects of the decoction of Lignum Guaiaci.

This decoction commonly excites a grateful ſenſation of warmth in the ſtomach; it gives a ſenſe of dryneſs to the mouth, and creates thirſt; it alſo increaſes the natural temperature of the ſkin, and renders the pulſe more frequent. If the patient drink the decoction made warm, and lie in bed, it gene-

* Cullen's Materia Medica, p. 196.
Apparat. Medicam. Murray, Vol. III. p. 414.

rally

rally proves moderately ſudorific; and this effect may be heightened as much as we pleaſe, by employing the hot bath, the vapour bath, antimonials combined with opium, or the pulvis ipecacuanhæ compoſitus. When the decoction has been continued during ten or twelve days, in the quantity of four pints each day, the patient often complains of its producing the heart-burn, accompanied with flatulence; and he is uſually coſtive during the whole courſe. If the perſon expoſe himſelf freely to the air, while he is taking this medicine, the ſecretion of urine will be augmented, but no ſenſible alteration will take place in the ſtate of the ſkin.

When I have exhibited the decoction of Guaiacum in pains of the bones, as they are called, confining the patient at the ſame time to the bed, and enjoining a diet conſiſting of fluids only, I have rarely ſeen any beneficial conſequences reſult from the uſe of it, except where it acted as a ſudorific; and, in this reſpect, I think its qualities manifeſtly inferior to antimony, or volatile alkali. In ſeveral inſtances, after perſiſting in a courſe of it during four or five weeks, I have not gained any material advantage; and I have remarked, that when the

dolores

dolores oſtocopi were not connected with ſome morbid alteration of the ſtructure of a part, this medicine was of little avail. When the ſtrength and vigour has been reduced by a ſucceſsful mercurial courſe, with confinement to the houſe, and where a thickened ſtate of the ligaments, or of the perioſteum, remains, or where there are foul indolent ulcers, theſe ſores will often heal, and the enlarged membranes will ſubſide, during the adminiſtration of this decoction.

The decoction of Guaiacum will often ſuſpend the progreſs of certain ſecondary ſymptoms of lues venerea, for a ſhort time; ſuch as, ulcers of the tonſils, venereal eruptions, and even nodes; but I never ſaw one ſingle inſtance, in which the powers of this medicine eradicated the venereal virus. It has been recommended by many people, to combine guaiacum with mercury, with the intention of improving the ſpecific powers, and of counteracting the injurious effects, of that mineral: the advantages to be derived from this compound mode of treatment, are by no means well eſtabliſhed; for Guaiacum is certainly no antidote againſt ſyphilis; nor have any proofs been given to the public, of its meliorating the

the action of mercury. When the decoction is given during the mercurial courſe, it ſometimes ſeems to improve the health; but, as it is very liable to produce complaints in the ſtomach and bowels, the palpable inconveniencies commonly ſurpaſs the uncertain advantages connected with it; and, as no previous courſe of the decoction renders the diſeaſe milder, nor authorizes us to reſt ſatisfied with a ſmaller quantity of mercury than uſual, it will ſeldom happen, that a ſatisfactory reaſon can be aſſigned, for giving the two medicines to a patient at the ſame time. In concluding this chapter, I would farther remark, that I have given the decoction of Guaiacum, with the beſt effects, to a great number of patients, in cutaneous diſeaſes, in the ozaena, and in ſcrofulous affections of the membranes and ligaments; and it appears to me, that it is equally efficacious in ſuch morbid alterations, which are not at all connected with the lues venerea, nor with the mode of treating it, as in thoſe caſes for which it has been the moſt highly celebrated.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the RADIX CHINÆ.

THIS root, which is the product of both the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, was introduced into medical practice in Europe, under the character of an infallible remedy againſt the lues venerea, about the year 1535. Decoctions of the China root had been employed with advantage in cutaneous diſeaſes, and in gouty and rheumatic complaints, before that period; but the real or ſuppoſed benefit which the Emperor Charles the Fifth obtained from taking this medicine, procured it a reputation which, had it been confined to people in the common ranks of life, no virtues of its own would ever have acquired.*

The regimen which was preſcribed, during the adminiſtration of this medicine in venereal caſes, was much leſs rigorous, with reſpect to diet and confinement in bed, than where Guaiacum was employed; and the courſe was ſel-

* Veſalii. Opera, Tom. II. Frampton, Fol. 13.

dom

dom protracted beyond thirty days: theſe circumſtances would no doubt contribute to the preference given to this decoction, by thoſe who eſteemed it fully as efficacious as the Lignum Guaiaci.*

To inquire into the various cauſes that concurred in procuring celebrity to a root, which in reality poſſeſſes few, or perhaps no uſeful medicinal qualities at all, would be irkſome and unprofitable: it may be therefore ſufficient to ſtate, that its reputation was of ſhort continuance; that it ſunk gradually into inſignificance and neglect, and that if a place had not been aſſigned to it in ſome compound decoctions, it would, before now, have been altogether overlooked, or forgotten.†

Perhaps, it may not be improper to ſuggeſt, that the eager introduction of the China root, at a ſeaſon when Guaiacum enjoyed the higheſt reputation as an antidote againſt Syphilis, may ſeem to afford ſomething like a preſumption, that the latter vegetable did not poſſeſs the intire confidence of thoſe who employed it. Without inſiſting upon an argument of this

* Nic. Maſſa. in Aphrod. Fallopius ib.

† Apparat. Medicam.

kind,

kind, I ſhall only obſerve, that this circumſtance, along with a multitude of ſimilar incidents, may be fairly reſolved into that ficklenefs, caprice, or love of novelty, which exerciſe a more powerful influence over the determinations and actions of the greater part of mankind, than a regard either to truth or utility.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the RADIX SARSAPARILLÆ.

THE root of Sarſaparilla was brought into Europe from the Weſt Indies, about the year 1530, with the character of being a medicine ſingularly efficacious in the cure of lues venerea. Some of the early writers on the merits of this plant, have been neither diſtinct nor uniform, in the accounts they have given of its virtues. By ſome, it was preferred to the Lignum Guaiaci;* while others maintained, that its ſanative powers were really inferior to this vegetable, but that they were ſuperior to thoſe of the China root.†

The

* Regium eſt hoc auxilium, & antidotum ad fugandam Luem iſtam, & hac ratione ego fido Salſæ magis quam Ligno. Imbecillior eſt certe Ligno: habet tamen ipſa nobiles vires, quibus ſuperat Guaiacum, & eſt quod ſi poſt ſuperatum gallicum reſtent ulcera, Rhagades circa ſedem, duplo citius ſanat hæc, quam Lignum Indicum. Fallopius de Morbo Gallico. Cap. LXIII.

† Ut ſummatim dicam, in Salſaperilia ſunt omnes virtutes ſicut in Ligno Indico ſunt, *sed debiliores*, & ideo medici

The Sarſaparilla was adminiſtered under the form of decoction, ſyrup, and powder; and theſe preparations were often rendered more complex, by the addition of ſeveral other articles of the materia medica, which were ſuppoſed to add efficacy to the principal ingredient. Yet, notwithſtanding the high reputation which this medicine ſuſtained among the early practitioners, it fell gradually into diſuſe and neglect; and the decoction of it was at length conſidered, as poſſeſſing merely the properties of a convenient diluent.

The Sarſaparilla root was however brought into more general eſteem, about the middle of the preſent century, by the late Dr. William Hunter, who adviſed Dr. Chapman to make trial of it, in a very deplorable caſe of phagedenic bubo;* and, the ſtriking advantages which were derived from the uſe of it in that inſtance, induced Dr. Hunter to recommend it to ſeveral other medical practitioners. In no long time after this, Sir William Fordyce publiſhed a narrative, containing

medici non pauci ejus virtutem augere conantur cum permixtione Ligni Indici.—Atque aliarum medicinarum, & aliorum ſimplicium permixtione. Nic. Maſſa. Cap. II.

* Chapman on the Venereal Diſeaſe. Ed. 2d.

a ſeries

a ſeries of experiments, made to aſcertain the virtues of Sarſaparilla in venereal caſes; to which he ſubjoined ſuch practical remarks as the courſe of his obſervations had furniſhed. I ſhall inſert theſe concluſions, for the ſake of offering ſome reflections on them.*

1. "It (Sarſaparilla) will commonly re-
"lieve, in a very ſhort ſpace of time, vene-
"real head-achs, and nocturnal pains; and,
"if perſiſted in, I believe will always cure.

2. "In emaciated or conſumptive habits,
"from a venereal cauſe, it is the greateſt
"reſtorer of appetite, fleſh, colour, ſtrength,
"and vigor, that I know of.

3. "When the throat, noſe, palate, or
"the ſpungy bones in general are affected
"with a ſlough or *caries*, it will commonly
"compleat the cure, if perſevered in long
"enough, provided a mercurial courſe, I
"mean by unction, has preceded the uſe of
"the ſarſaparilla.

4. "When the body is covered with dry
"blotches, or moiſt ſores, (ſtill ſuppoſing the
"cauſe venereal) it will greatly promote the
"cure, nay often compleat it: but without

* Medical Obſervations and Inquiries. Vol. I.

" the aſſiſtance of mercury, there will be " danger of a relapſe.

5. " In ſimple chancres it will do little " ſervice, but if it is given in caſes where " the chancres or buboes will not heal or " diſſolve, after the uſe of mercurial unction, " it will often cure, and always do manifeſt " ſervice.

6. " It will oftentimes anſwer, and that " ſpeedily, without ſweating, confinement, " or any very ſtrict *regimen*, at all ſeaſons of " the year, where mercurial unctions, and " long-continued courſes of ſtrong decoc- " tions of Guaiacum, either by itſelf ſimply, " or compounded with a ſmall proportion of " our Sarſaparilla, have failed.

7. " It would ſeem probable, from any " obſervations I have yet been able to make, " that the Sarſaparilla root is only to be " depended on, in venereal caſes where " mercury has failed; at leaſt, has preceded " the uſe of the decoction, or when it is " combined with it; and therefore is not " to be truſted to alone, unleſs in ſuch cir- " cumſtances.

8. " Mercury alone will in general cure " moſt venereal complaints. The Sarſapa- " rilla will perhaps always cure what reſiſts

" the

" the power of mercury. It is therefore " probable, that we may find in mercury " and Sarſaparilla properly combined, a cer- " tain cure for every caſe that can be called " venereal."

My own experience of the efficacy of Sarſaparilla in venereal complaints, has indeed obliged me to form a very different eſtimate of its good qualities, from that which is given in the preceding obſervations; yet I would by no means affect to depreciate the labours of Sir William Fordyce, or to queſtion the good faith with which his reports were collected. Indeed, the publication of his papers has been attended with the advantage of recalling the attention of medical men, to an uſeful article of the materia medica; and, if the advocate of this neglected medicine over-rated its uſeful properties, our obligations are ſtill due to him, for introducing into more general notice, a vegetable remedy which has been too much undervalued by men of eminence in the profeſſion.*

* Thus it fell into diſrepute, and by degrees was almoſt forgotten, inſomuch that of late, ſome of our greateſt

In the firſt of the foregoing remarks, Sir William Fordyce has expreſsly aſſerted, that Sarſaparilla can cure the venereal diſeaſe: the ſecond remark does not expreſs any thing more, than that this vegetable poſſeſſes eminently nutritive qualities. In the ſix following paragraphs, he requires, that a mercurial courſe ſhall have preceded the exhibition of the decoction; or that mercury ſhall be given in conjunction with it. It likewiſe appears farther, that Sarſaparilla cannot cure the primary ſymptoms of ſyphilis; and that, with one ſingle exception, it never cures the ſecondary ſymptoms, without the co-operation of mercury. From the general tenor of the paper referred to, I cannot ſuppoſe, that the author deſigned to propoſe the Sarſaparilla as a competitor with mercury; but that he rather intended to teach, that the former

greateſt maſters of medicine have aſſerted, that its decoction is no better than barley water.

Med. Obſ. and Enq. Vol. I.

If I was to conſult my own experience alone, I ſhould not give this root a place in the Materia Medica; for, tried in every ſhape, I have never found it an effectual medicine, in Syphilis, or any other diſeaſe.

Cullen's Mat. Med. Vol. II.

medicine

medicine could remove venereal ſymptoms, to the cure of which the latter was unequal, and which, on ſome occaſions, would even aggravate them. In proſecuting this ſubject, I ſhall, for the ſake of perſpicuity, divide it into two diſtinct queſtions.

1ſt. Is the Sarſaparilla root, when given alone, to be ſafely relied on, in the treatment of Lues Venerea?

The late Mr. Bromfeild, my predeceſſor, and, during ſome years, my colleague at the Lock Hoſpital, has given a very decided anſwer to this queſtion: "I ſolemnly declare, "(ſays he,) I never ſaw a ſingle inſtance in "my life, where it cured that diſorder without "the aſſiſtance of mercury; either given at "the ſame time with it, or when it had been "previouſly taken before the decoction was "directed."*

My own experience, during many years, coincides intirely with the obſervations of Mr. Bromfeild. I have employed the Sarſaparilla, in powder, and in decoctions, in an almoſt infinite variety of caſes; and I feel myſelf fully authoriſed to aſſert, that this

* Practical Obſervations on the Uſe of Corroſive Sublimate, and Sarſaparilla, &c. P. 78.

plant has not the power of curing any one form of the lues venerea.

The Sarſaparilla indeed, like the Guaiacum, is capable of alleviating ſymptoms derived from the venereal virus; and it ſometimes manifeſts the power of ſuſpending, for a time, the deſtructive ravages of that contagion: but, where the poiſon has not been previouſly ſubdued by mercury, the ſymptoms will quickly return; and, in addition to them, we often ſee the moſt indubitable proofs, that the diſeaſe is making an actual progreſs, during the regular adminiſtration of the vegetable remedy.

The nature of that benefit which many perſons actually obtain from Sarſaparilla, when they are afflicted with the lues venerea, will form a ſubject of diſcuſſion hereafter; in the mean time, I ſhall proceed to treat the ſecond queſtion, connected with the inquiry before me.

2. When the Sarſaparilla root is given, in conjunction with mercury, does it render the mercurial courſe more certain and efficacious?

In replying to this query, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that the phraſe "to increaſe the

"efficacy

"efficacy of mercury," may imply, that a ſmaller quantity of this mineral antidote, will confer ſecurity on an infected perſon, when Sarſaparilla is added to it: or, it may mean, that mercury would be ſometimes unequal to the cure, without the aid of Sarſaparilla. If a decoction of this root did indeed poſſeſs ſo admirable a quality, that the quantity of mercury neceſſary to effect a cure, might be ſafely reduced, whenever it was given during a mercurial courſe, it would form a moſt valuable addition to our materia medica. This opinion has been, however, unfortunately falſified by the moſt ample experience; and, whoever ſhall be ſo unwary as to act upon ſuch a preſumption, will be ſure to find his own and his patient's expectations egregiouſly diſappointed.

If the Sarſaparilla root be a genuine antidote againſt the ſyphilitic virus, it ought to cure the diſeaſe when adminiſtered alone; but, if no direct proof can be adduced of its being equal to this, any arguments founded on hiſtories where mercury had been previouſly given, or where both the medicines were adminiſtered at the ſame time, muſt be ambiguous and undeciſive.

It appears probable, that Sir William Fordyce, and ſome other perſons, entertained a notion, that there were certain venereal ſymptoms which commonly reſiſted the potency of mercury; and that the Sarſaparilla was an appropriate remedy in theſe caſes. This opinion, I believe, is not correct, for it militates againſt all I have ever obſerved of the progreſs and treatment of lues venerea.

Indeed, thoſe patients who have lately uſed a full courſe of mercury, often complain of nocturnal pains in their limbs; they are ſometimes afflicted with painful enlargements of the elbow and knee joints; or they have membranous nodes, cutaneous exulcerations, and certain other ſymptoms, reſembling thoſe which are the offspring of the venereal virus. It may and does often happen, that appearances like theſe are miſtaken for a true venereal affection; and, in conſequence of this error, mercury is adminiſtered, which never fails to exaſperate the diſeaſe. Now, if a ſtrong decoction of the Sarſaparilla root be given to perſons under theſe circumſtances, it will ſeldom fail of producing the moſt beneficial effects; hence it has been contended, that ſymptoms derived from the contagion of

Lues

Lues Venerea, which could not be cured by mercury, have finally yielded to this vegetable remedy. It muſt be acknowledged, that repreſentations of this kind have a ſpecious and impoſing air; nevertheleſs, I ſhall endeavour to prove, that they are neither exact nor concluſive.

If any of the above-named ſymptoms ſhould appear near the concluſion of a courſe of mercury, when that medicine was operating powerfully on the whole ſyſtem, it would be a ſtrange and inexplicable thing, if they could poſſibly be derived immediately from the uncontrolled agency of the venereal virus: this would imply ſomething like a palpable contradiction, that the antidote ſhould be operating with ſufficient efficacy to cure the venereal ſymptoms for which it was directed; while, at the ſame time, the venereal virus was proceeding to contaminate new parts, and to excite a new order of appearances.

One ſource, and a very common one, to which ſome of the miſtakes committed upon this ſubject may be traced, is a perſuaſion, that every morbid alteration which ariſes in an infected perſon, is actually tainted with the venereal

venereal virus, and ought to be aſcribed to it, as its true cauſe.

Every experienced ſurgeon muſt, however, be aware, that very little of truth and reality exiſts in a repreſentation of this kind. The contagious matter, and the mineral ſpecific, may jointly produce in certain habits of body, a new ſeries of ſymptoms, which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are not venereal; which cannot be cured by mercury; and which are ſometimes more to be dreaded, than the ſimple and natural effects of the venereal virus. Some of the moſt formidable of theſe appearances may be ſometimes removed by Sarſaparilla, the venereal virus ſtill remaining in the ſyſtem; and, when the force of that poiſon has been completely ſubdued by mercury, the ſame vegetable is alſo capable of freeing the patient, from what may be called, the ſequelæ of a mercurial courſe.

I ſtate theſe facts with confidence, becauſe they have been carefully verified by long and extenſive experience: how far they may quadrate, or not, with any particular hypotheſis, is not my preſent concern.

This part of the ſubject will receive ſome illuſtration, by a recital of the following caſes.

CASE

CASE THE FIRST.

In the year 1789, I was conſulted by a gentleman, on account of a diſorder in his throat, which he conſidered as the return of a venereal complaint. He had uſed a courſe of mercury, under the direction of a ſurgeon, for a chancre, and an ulcer on one of the tonſils: theſe ſymptoms had gradually diſappeared, and he was declared, by his ſurgeon, to be cured. In about a fortnight after he had ceaſed to employ mercury, his throat became painful, and ulcerated; this being conſidered as a relapſe, he reſumed the uſe of the ſpecific, but gained no advantage from it; on the contrary, he ſeemed worſe. At this period, I firſt ſaw him:—he was much reduced; had a very quick and feeble pulſe; and complained of great general debility. On examining his throat, I found one of the tonſils intirely deſtroyed; the ulcer had corroded about one half of the uvula, and of the velamen palatinum on that ſide; and it was proceeding rapidly down the velamen palatinum on the other ſide. I declared the ulcer not to be venereal; and directed the gentleman to go into the country,

country, to adopt a generous plan of diet; and to take a pint and a half of a ſtrong decoction of Sarſaparilla every day. The amendment which ſucceeded on his following thoſe directions, was rapid and deciſive; he was perfectly well in about a month, and had no ſymptoms afterwards of a ſyphilitic nature.

CASE THE SECOND.

A young gentleman had a chancre, which was ſucceeded by a bubo; and, not uſing mercury effectually, a venereal ulcer appeared ſome time afterwards in his throat. His ſurgeon directed him to keep at home, and conducted him through a very proper courſe of mercury. The primary ſymptoms were ſoon cured; but the ulcer in his throat remained foul and ſloughy, and ſhewed no tendency to heal. When he had nearly employed as much mercury as had been intended, ſeveral ſmall tubercles appeared on different parts of his body, which were ſoon converted into deep foul ulcers, of a conſiderable extent: theſe ſores were likewiſe extremely painful, and diſcharged large quantities of a fetid ſanies. The patient was greatly

greatly emaciated; he had a quick and feeble pulſe, and exhibited every appearance of one in a very declining ſtate of health. At this period of the diſeaſe, I was conſulted; and adviſed, that the mercury ſhould be diſcontinued; that he ſhould be taken out every day in a carriage; and that he ſhould take the decoction and powder of Sarſaparilla. The gentleman perſevered nearly three weeks, in following theſe directions, before he experienced any conſiderable amendment; but, after the expiration of that time, he recovered rapidly, ſo that his ſores were healed, and his health was reſtored, in about two months from the time of my firſt viſiting him.

Theſe two caſes will ſerve to illuſtrate what I have advanced in the foregoing pages; and illuſtration is all I deſign by them. I ſhould find no difficulty in filling many pages with recitals of the good effects of Sarſaparilla, taken after a mercurial courſe, where there have been nocturnal pains, ſwellings of the larger joints, nodes of the perioſteum, caries of different bones of the face, and theſe accompanied with hectical ſymptoms, atrophy, and other formidable appearances: but I conceive,

ceive, that to multiply narratives of this kind, would be rather oſtentatious than uſeful.

The inſtances in which the beneficial effects of Sarſaparilla are permanent, are thoſe where the diſeaſe has been previouſly cured by mercury; and where new ſymptoms have ariſen, not at all connected with the active ſtate of the venereal virus. But I have alſo ſaid, that this vegetable may do ſervice in caſes where the ſyphilitic poiſon has not been deſtroyed by the proper antidote: here the advantages derived from this medicine, are merely temporary, and commonly of a ſhort duration. Of the truth of this ſtatement, the following hiſtories will afford a ſufficient illuſtration.

CASE THE THIRD.

R. B. aged twenty-five years, became my patient towards the latter end of the year 1794, after having employed two mercurial courſes, unſucceſsfully, in the country. When I firſt ſaw him, his knees, ankles, and elbow joints, were very much ſwollen, painful, and almoſt immoveable; he was greatly emaciated; had a quick pulſe; profuſe night ſweats, with

with the common hectical ſymptoms; and his general appearance was that of a man in the laſt ſtage of a phthiſis pulmonalis. In addition to theſe complaints, he had a large node on the forehead, and another on the tibia of the left leg. I directed him to take the powder of Sarſaparilla, with lime water; and to uſe ſuch nouriſhing diet as his ſtomach could receive. In the ſpace of three weeks, he had amended conſiderably; his pains were quite relieved; he could move his legs and arms; his pulſe was reduced to nearly the natural ſtandard; and he was evidently regaining his fleſh and ſtrength. He perſevered in this courſe of medicine, during two months, and his health ſeemed to be perfectly re-eſtabliſhed: but the venereal nodes which had nearly ſubſided, now began to increaſe rapidly; he ſuffered much from nocturnal pains, and his health viſibly declined. Under theſe circumſtances, I concluded that the venereal virus was now proceeding in its uſual courſe, and I accordingly deſiſted from giving him the Sarſaparilla, and directed the uſe of mercury.

CASE

CASE THE FOURTH.

Mrs. ——, aged forty years, had undergone two ſucceſſive courſes of mercury, on account of a venereal ulcer in the throat; and the diſeaſe had recurred twice. I ſaw her firſt, about three months after the termination of the ſecond mercurial courſe: at that time ſhe had a venereal ulcer on one of the tonſils, and complained of nocturnal head-achs. The infirm ſtate of her health, rendered the immediate uſe of mercury improper; I therefore ordered a common gargle; the decoction of Sarſaparilla with bark; and adviſed her to remove into the country until her health ſhould be improved. By perſevering in this mode of treatment, during two months, ſhe recovered her health; the ulcer in her throat was healed; and ſhe ceaſed to complain of head-ach. From theſe favourable appearances, ſhe too haſtily concluded herſelf to be well; but, in about ſix weeks from this period, the ulcer again appeared in her throat; ſhe had a node on one of the parietal bones, and complained as much of pain as ever. I therefore thought it proper to inſiſt on her employing another courſe of mercury.

CASE

CASE THE FIFTH.

Mr. F. uſed mercury, under the direction of an apothecary, on account of a chancre, and was ſuppoſed to be cured. In about three months afterwards, ſeveral venereal blotches appeared on his forehead, and he ſuffered very ſeverely from nocturnal head-achs. His apothecary, not ſuppoſing theſe ſymptoms to be venereal, gave him the extract of Sarſaparilla, diſſolved in a decoction of the root of that plant. This diet drink ſuſpended the violence of the head-ach, and the eruption diſappeared entirely. But, while he was ſtill taking this medicine, with a view of eſtabliſhing his health completely, the pains returned with an increaſed violence, and the eruptions appeared again upon his forehead. He now placed himſelf under my care; and his complaints were finally removed by the adminiſtration of mercury.

CASE THE SIXTH.

Mr. C. underwent a long and ſevere courſe of mercury, on account of an ulcer in his

throat, and a node on the left tibia: at the concluſion of it, he was much emaciated; his health was in a bad ſtate, and he was nearly deprived of the uſe of his limbs. The ulcer in his throat was, however, healed, and the node had ſubſided. The gentleman who attended him, ſuppoſing the venereal virus to be extinguiſhed, adviſed a courſe of warm ſea-bathing; and Mr. C. went down to Brighthelmſtone for that purpoſe. During his continuance there, he derived no advantage from the ſea air, nor from the warm baths; and, after remaining nearly ſix weeks, he returned to town, and requeſted my attendance. When I firſt ſaw him, he was greatly emaciated; was extremely feeble; and the joints of his lower extremities ſo much ſwollen and painful, that he was obliged to uſe crutches, in removing from his bed-chamber into his drawing-room. The perioſteum was tender, and ſomewhat thickened, at that part where the node had formerly exiſted; but the tumefaction was inconſiderable. By taking the decoction and powder of Sarſaparilla, he recovered his health, regained the uſe of his limbs, and acquired his uſual degree of ſtrength: but, although he flattered himſelf that his

his complaints were removed, I ſuggeſted ſome doubts of his being free from the Lues Venerea. In leſs than three months from the time I firſt ſaw him, the node began again to riſe, and became very painful; the lower part of the ulna enlarged conſiderably, rendering the motion of the fore arm, both painful and difficult; a venereal ulcer appeared in his throat; and his body was almoſt covered with eruptions. The diſeaſe in his throat, the blotches on his ſkin, and the node on the ulna, were removed in a few weeks, by the agency of mercury; but his cure was not completed, till after the exfoliation of a piece of carious bone from the tibia of the left leg.

CASE THE SEVENTH.

One of my patients in the Lock Hoſpital, who had nearly completed his courſe of inunction, ſhewed me a little tumor, reſembling a ſmall boil, upon the ſkin of his forehead, covering the right ſide of the frontal bone; this tumor was red and painful, and had a ſmall pimple in its centre, containing a tranſparent fluid. In the courſe of two or three days, a little

matter was diſcharged ſpontaneouſly from the boil, and a rapid and extenſive ulceration ſucceeded its rupture. The ulcer ſoon deſtroyed a portion of the ſkin, as large as the palm of the hand; the cellular membrane ſeparated in large offenſive ſloughs; and the ſloughing extended under the ſound ſkin, beyond the margin of the ulcer, occaſioning a great extent of hollowneſs, from this loſs of ſubſtance. The deſtruction of the cellular membrane took place in every direction; and the miſchief extended as low as the inner angle of the eye.

This ulcer was of a very irregular figure, was extremely painful, and diſcharged large quantities of an offenſive ſanies, mixed with corrupted cellular membrane. I ſuſpended the mercurial courſe; adviſed the patient to remove from the hoſpital into lodgings; and directed him to take Sarſaparilla, both in powder and decoction. The ſore was waſhed with a ſtrong decoction of the ſhavings of Guaiacum, and covered with a carrot poultice. By purſuing this method, with ſuch occaſional variation of the dreſſings as the ſtate of the ſore indicated, it was perfectly healed in about ſix weeks. As I knew that this

this patient was not perfectly cured of the Lues Venerea, I ordered him to return to the hoſpital, on the firſt appearance of any ſuſpicious ſymptoms: he accordingly applied to me, about a month after the healing of the ſore on his forehead, and ſhewed me ulcers on both the tonſils, and on the poſterior part of the fauces; for which I directed a courſe of mercury.

The ulcer which I have now been deſcribing, is not a very uncommon occurrence: I have ſeen it ſeveral times in private practice, as well as in the Lock Hoſpital; and it has, in every inſtance, yielded to the mode of treatment deſcribed above.

As my principal deſign, in the introduction of caſes into this work, is illuſtration, the foregoing hiſtories will ſufficiently fulfil the object propoſed; I ſhall, therefore, omit inſerting many others which I had ſelected for that purpoſe, and proceed to offer ſome practical obſervations.

The third, fourth, fifth, and ſixth narratives, evince the virtues of Sarſaparilla, in caſes truly venereal; they do not, indeed, ſhew that it can cure the diſeaſe; but they afford ample evidence of its power in abating the

violence of ſome ſymptoms, and retarding the progreſs of others, without proving permanently beneficial to the patient.

The ſeventh narrative preſents an inſtance of what I ſuggeſted before; that new diſeaſes may ariſe during a mercurial courſe, which are not truly venereal, and which are exaſperated by mercury; and that theſe complaints may be removed by Sarſaparilla, (and ſometimes by other medicines,) the original diſeaſe remaining unſubdued. The ſeveral facts which have been alleged in the courſe of this chapter, prove very ſufficiently that Sarſaparilla is a good medicine; but they likewiſe militate againſt the notion of its being an antidote deſerving of confidence, in Lues Venerea. It may, perhaps, be urged in its behalf, that it is a ſpecific *quoad hoc*; ſince it alleviates venereal ſymptoms, and checks, in ſome degree, the progreſs of the diſeaſe. Againſt this plea, however, I would adduce what muſt appear like a very deciſive objection; that no quantity of Sarſaparilla can ſucceſsfully oppoſe the action of the ſyphilitic virus beyond a very limited period; ſince the diſeaſe will continue to ſpread, and infect the ſyſtem more deeply, and even demonſtrate the

the reality of its progreſs, by the appearance of new and additional ſymptoms, at the very time when the patient is under the full influence of the medicine, and is actually taking as large quantities of it as his ſtomach can retain. Nothing like this is ever ſeen to occur, during a ſkilful adminiſtration of mercury.

It cannot be deemed neceſſary to produce any more evidence of the inſufficiency of Sarſaparilla, as a proper and certain remedy in the Lues Venerea; but, while I reject it as a ſpecific, I would by no means diſparage it as a medicine poſſeſſing no valuable qualities. In thoſe caſes where the malignant powers of the virus have proved materially prejudicial to the health, ſo that the patient cannot enter upon the uſe of mercury with propriety, the decoction and powder of Sarſaparilla, will often retard the deſtructive agency of the venereal poiſon, and repair the breaches made in the conſtitution: it may be ſometimes given with advantage, during a courſe of mercurial frictions, when it does not occaſion a determination to the bowels; and it will almoſt invariably remove many of the moſt troubleſome ſequelæ of a courſe of mercury.

Nor are the ſalutary properties of the Sarſaparilla root uſeful in thoſe diſeaſes only that are either immediately or remotely connected with Syphilis; its beneficial effects are often demonſtrated in the treatment of foul, untractable, ſpreading ſores; in more than one form of ſcrofula; and in the Elephantiaſis, or at leaſt, in cutaneous affections nearly reſembling thoſe to which that appellation is given.

The two following obſervations, recorded by Mr. Bromfeild, may not be unacceptable to ſome of my readers. "Mary Parr, aged "twenty-eight years, when admitted into "St. George's Hoſpital, had large blotches "on ſeveral parts of her body, but particularly on her head and face, which were "incruſted with broad hard ſcabs. Her caſe, "from appearances, was judged venereal, "though the poor woman declared, ſhe never "had any reaſon to ſuſpect it. A courſe of "mercurial frictions looſened the incruſtations, and the ſubjacent ulcers began to "diſcharge. Some of thoſe on her body "ſeemed to yield to the mercury, though "it had but little effect on thoſe of her "head and face; and, during the courſe, her

"right

" right eye-lid began to be affected with the " ſame kind of blotch, which ended in a " Lippitudo. She continued under ſalivation " ſeven weeks, and, during the courſe, the " bark was given with advantage."

Mr. Bromfeild then tried the Solanum Lethale, but without any good effect. He obſerves, " the old ſores broke out, and " thoſe ſhe had on her face ſpread very " much, ſoon after ſhe began taking the laſt " medicine; particularly thoſe on the Alæ " Naſi and under-lip; which occaſioned a " great loſs of ſubſtance in both."——" The " remarkable ſucceſs we had in a ſimilar " caſe, not long before, with the decoction of " Sarſaparilla root, made us recommend it " for this poor creature, but with very little " hopes of ſucceſs, or indeed of her life. She " took it with milk, a quart in the twenty-four " hours, and, in a month's time, her ſores " were all healed, and ſhe recovered her health " and ſtrength."—

" The inducement to try the Sarſaparilla, " in the above caſe, aroſe from the ſervice " it had done a poor girl, who had been " formerly ſalivated in one of the city hoſ- " pitals, for large blotches, which were

" thought

" thought venereal. They yielded a little " to the mercury during her ſpitting; but " ſoon after the eruptions returned, and ſhe " was received into St. George's. Another " ſalivation was recommended, which ſhe " underwent with as little advantage as " formerly; ſhe was conſiderably ſunk by " her courſe of mercury; there remained " deep ulcers in her face; and the Alæ Naſi " were almoſt deſtroyed by the ſharpneſs of " the humour. She began the decoction of " Sarſaparilla with milk, drank a quart in " the day, and continued it for a month; by " which means her ſores were healed, and " ſhe was reſtored to perfect health. From " the obſervations I have made, of the ill " effects of mercury, very often, in ſcorbutic " habits, I am apt to believe, that the above " caſes were both of them of that ſpecies, or, " inclining to the lepra, and not venereal."*

Since the year 1793, in which I publiſhed ſome Obſervations on the Elephantiaſis,† I have had about ſeven or eight diſtinctly marked caſes of that diſeaſe under my care. In

* An account of the Engliſh Nightſhades, &c.

† Practical Obſervations on Cancerous Complaints, &c.

one

one patient, who had blotches on the face, reſembling thoſe deſcribed by Mr. Bromfeild, the exhibiting of mercury in very ſmall doſes, proved eminently uſeful. The reſtoration of all the other patients to health, was effected by the uſe of decoctions, in which the Sarſaparilla root was a principal ingredient.

The opportunities I have had of acquiring a farther knowledge of the hiſtory of the Elephantiaſis, have furniſhed me with the moſt ſatisfactory proofs, that it is an hereditary diſeaſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the MEZEREUM.

THE Mezereum root is ſometimes mentioned, by the early writers on the venereal diſeaſe,* as a cathartic proper to be given on certain ſpecified occaſions; but it was firſt introduced into practice, as an appropriate remedy againſt one order of venereal ſymptoms, by Dr. Alexander Ruſſell, who publiſhed an account of its virtues, in the third volume of the London Medical Obſervations and Inquiries. "The diſeaſe," ſays Dr. Ruſſell, "for which I principally recommend the "decoction of the *Mezereon* root as a cure, "is the venereal node, that proceeds from "a thickening of the *membrane* of the bones. "In a thickening of the perioſteum from "other cauſes, I have ſeen very good effects "from it: and it is frequently of ſervice "in the removal of thoſe nocturnal pains

* Aphrodiſiacus. P. 1080, &c.

"with

" with which venereal patients are afflicted; " though, in this laſt caſe, excepting with " regard to the pain that is occaſioned by the " node, I own, I have not found its effects " ſo certain, as I at firſt thought I had reaſon " to believe.—I do not find it of ſervice in " the cure of any other ſymptoms of the " venereal diſeaſe." *

This account of the virtues of Mezereum root, as an antivenereal remedy, is delivered with ſo much candour and fairneſs, that if it be not calculated to excite high expectations, it certainly contains nothing that can neceſſarily miſlead. The ſeventeen caſes which Dr. Ruſſell has recorded, do by no means warrant a ſtronger form of expreſſion than what he has adopted; and, although Dr. Home, in his Clinical Experiments and Hiſtories, has aſſerted, that " this root is a powerful " deobſtruent in all venereal tumors, of the " ſcirrhous kind, where mercury has failed;" the evidence he has adduced of this fact, is ſo ſcanty and inſufficient, that it can ſcarcely be regarded as forming an addition to Dr. Ruſſell's prior report.

* Med. Obſ. and Inq. Vol. III. P. 194, 195.

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The Mezereum root is therefore ſaid to have the virtue of curing one ſymptom of the venereal diſeaſe, a membranous node, or, " a thickening of the perioſteum;" while it poſſeſſes no efficacy againſt any other ſymptom. Now, I conceive, that ſuch a repreſentation of the fact before us, is not free from ambiguity; as it may imply, that the Mezereum can reduce a membranous node, conſidered as a local diſeaſe; or, that it can cure a venereal node, according to the ſtrict ſenſe of the words; ſo that, when the morbid alteration of the membrane is removed by the agency of this medicine, the patient may be regarded as perfectly free from any venereal taint: or, to ſtate this matter in other words; that the Mezereum root can ſubdue one particular effect of Lues Venerea, without removing the cauſe; or that, in the ſingle inſtance now under conſideration, it can deſtroy both the cauſe and the effect.

The reſult of my own experience by no means accords with this repreſentation; from all that I have been able to collect, in the courſe of many years obſervation, I feel myſelf authoriſed to aſſert unequivocally, that the Mezereum has not the power of curing the

the venereal diſeaſe, in any one ſtage, or under any one form.

If a decoction of this root ſhould ever reduce a venereal node, where no mercury has been previouſly given, yet the patient will by no means be exempted from the neceſſity of employing mercury, for as long a ſpace of time, and in as large a quantity, as if no Mezereum had been taken.

With reſpect to the power it is ſaid to poſſeſs, of alleviating the pain, and diminiſhing the bulk, of membranous nodes, nothing peculiar and appropriate can be aſcribed to the Mezereum on theſe accounts; ſince we obtain the ſame good effects, from Sarſaparilla, Guaiacum, Volatile Alkali, Bliſtering Plaſters, &c. Nevertheleſs, venereal nodes which have ſubſided under the uſe of any of theſe articles of the materia medica, will appear again, and often with additional ſymptoms, if a full and efficacious courſe of mercury be not ſubmitted to. It has indeed been alleged, that Mezereum always alleviates the pain occaſioned by a venereal node, and generally reduces it, where the perioſteum only is affected; and that it ſeldom fails of removing thoſe enlargements of the perioſteum

teum which have not yielded during the adminiſtration of mercury.

That ſome inſtances of ſucceſs, in caſes like theſe, may have fallen to the ſhare of thoſe who make the aſſertion, it would not become me to deny; but I have met with few ſuch agreeable evidences of the efficacy of this medicine. I have given the Mezereum in the form of a ſimple decoction, and alſo as an ingredient in compound decoctions of the woods, in many caſes, where no mercury had been previouſly employed, but never with advantage to a ſingle patient. I have alſo tried it in numerous inſtances, after the completion of a courſe of mercury; yet, with the exception of two caſes, where the thickened ſtate of the perioſteum was removed during the exhibition of it, I never ſaw the leaſt benefit derived from taking this medicine.

In a few caſes of anomalous pains, which I ſuppoſed were derived from irregularities during a mercurial courſe, the Mezereum was of ſervice, after I had tried the common decoction of the woods without ſucceſs; but, even in this deſcription of caſes, I have always found it a very uncertain remedy.

I have

I have made trial of this vegetable in a great number of ſcrofulous caſes, where the membranes covering the bones were in a diſeaſed ſtate, and I am not ſure that one ſingle patient obtained any evident and material benefit from it.

The late Dr. Cullen, whoſe reports may juſtly claim attention from all medical men, when treating of the Mezereum, in his Materia Medica, ſays, "I have frequently employed "it in ſeveral cutaneous affections, and "ſometimes with ſucceſs."* It were to have been wiſhed, that the profeſſor of medicine had ſpecified what thoſe diſeaſes of the ſkin were, in which the Mezereum was ſometimes employed with ſucceſs: for, if I except an inſtance or two of Lepra, in which the decoction of this plant conferred a temporary benefit, I have very ſeldom found it poſſeſſed of medicinal virtue, either in Syphilis, or in the ſequelæ of that diſeaſe; in Scrofula; or in cutaneous affections.

Indeed, the Mezereum is of ſo acrimonious a nature, often producing heat and other diſagreeable ſenſations in the fauces, and, on

* Mat. Med. Vol. P. 215.

many occaſions, diſordering the primæ viæ, that I do not often ſubject my patients to the certain inconveniencies which are connected with the primary effects of this medicine, as they are rarely compenſated by any other important and uſeful qualities.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the CINCHONA.

I Preſume, that no well-informed ſurgeon ever imagined a ſpecific virtue of curing the Lues Venerea, to reſide in the Peruvian bark: nevertheleſs, it cannot be doubted, that every regular practitioner, who is much engaged in treating this diſeaſe, has ſeen as good effects produced by the Cinchona, in caſes truly venereal, as by any one of the vegetables which has formed the ſubject of the preceding pages. If it has been alleged upon plauſible grounds, that Guaiacum poſſeſſes medicinal efficacy in venereal pains; Sarſaparilla, where there are phagedenic ulcers; and Mezereum, in caſes where there are membranous nodes. I would beg leave to add, that in the ſame ſenſe in which the utility of theſe plants may be admitted, I would contend for the ſalutary agency of the Cinchona, in incipient buboes, in ulcers of the tonſils, and in gangrenous ulcers from a venereal cauſe.

The hiſtory of an enlarged abſorbent gland in the groin, is frequently involved in too much obſcurity, to juſtify the giving of an immediate and decided opinion upon its real character; and, under ſuch a ſtate of doubt, I have often given the Peruvian bark with ſingular advantage. The tumefaction has ſubſided; the gland has become moveable and free from pain, and has returned almoſt to its natural ſtate; yet, notwithſtanding theſe favourable appearances, the gland has, after a ſhort time, again enlarged, proceeding rapidly to ſuppuration, and other venereal ſymptoms have ariſen, ſufficient to diſpel all ambiguity. On the adminiſtering of mercury to ſuch patients, the uſual good effects of that medicine have taken place, and terminated in the final cure of the diſeaſe. Inſtances of this kind, with ſome variations, have occurred to me ſo frequently, that I cannot ſuſpect myſelf of having miſtaken Scrofula for Lues Venerea, in every caſe; and, if the fact be admitted, that the Cinchona will ſometimes reduce a venereal bubo, without curing it, the concluſion which may be fairly drawn, is too obvious to be inſiſted upon.

My

My experience of the good effects of this medicine, in the venereal ſore throat, has been more enlarged, and if poſſible, more deciſive. I have repeatedly ſeen the ulcers become clean, and heal; the voice regain its clearneſs; and the health of the patient be quite re-eſtabliſhed; ſo that he has concluded himſelf well, contrary to my decided opinion. The diſeaſe has however conſtantly appeared again; often with the addition of new venereal ſymptoms; and, under theſe circumſtances, the patient has been invariably cured by mercury.

There are certain peculiarities of conſtitution, where the primary ulcer produced by the venereal virus, proceeds rapidly into a gangrenous ſtate; and, not uncommonly, the introduction of mercury at this period, rather haſtens, than controuls the deſtructive proceſs. I have received patients, at different times, into the Lock Hoſpital, with the whole penis in a ſphacelated ſtate, where the infection had not been received above a week previous to their admiſſion. To theſe men I gave Peruvian bark, and treated them according to the methods uſually adopted in caſes of mortification, without paying any attention to the remote cauſe of the ſphacelus. The penis

commonly ſeparated near the ſymphyſis of the oſſa pubis; the ſores healed; and the patients recovered and remained well, without requiring the aid of mercury.

In theſe particular inſtances, I ſuppoſed, that the early ſupervention of the gangrene, and the rapidity with which it proceeded, might be compared, not unaptly, to the application of a tight ligature made upon the penis, and that the abſorption of the virus was anticipated by the death of the part. The truth of my opinion was juſtified by the event; for the men did not afterwards ſuffer, from any form of the venereal diſeaſe: yet I do not imagine, that any perſon will aſcribe the extinction of the venereal poiſon, to the ſpecific virtues of the Peruvian bark.

It may not be quite ſuperfluous to ſuggeſt a caution, againſt employing the mode of reaſoning which I adopted, in a general and unqualified manner; for I fear it would not be correct and applicable to any caſes, except to thoſe which are recent, and where the deſtruction of the whole ſubſtance of the infected part has been ſudden and complete.

I have ſaid, that there are certain conſtitutions in which a chancre, on its firſt appearance,

ance, always becomes gangrenous; and I have more than once noticed this very unfavourable occurrence, in the ſame patient, every time he received the infection, although it did not always prevail in an equal degree. In caſes of this kind, the Peruvian bark is indicated, as well by the ſtate of the ſyſtem in general, as by the mortified condition of the affected part. Under a proper exhibition of this medicine, the ſloughs will ſeparate; the ulcer aſſume a clean and favourable aſpect; and ſometimes the ſore will even granulate and heal.

More commonly however, when all the parts are wearing a promiſing appearance, the ulcer becomes painful, foul, unequal on its ſurface, ſpreads viſibly every day, and has thick and indurated edges; and at this period the health begins to decline. The concurrence of theſe circumſtances indicate, that the venereal poiſon has reſumed an active ſtate; that nothing farther is to be expected from the Peruvian bark; and that the adminiſtration of mercury ought not to be delayed any longer.

Such facts as I have now ſtated, are by no means rare and extraordinary; they muſt

have been noticed by every ſurgeon who has had the advantage of an extenſive practice; yet I will venture to aſſert, that no ſuch man ever imagines that he is, in a proper ſenſe, curing the venereal diſeaſe, while he is merely promoting the exfoliation of parts, the texture and vitality of which have been deſtroyed by the ſyphilitic virus.

But, although the Cinchona is a remedy of great utility, when accidents like theſe ſupervene, yet it is not a medicine proper to be given indiſcriminately, either before or during a mercurial courſe. Where its tonic qualities are not indiſpenſably neceſſary, the power it has of diminiſhing the ſeveral ſecretions, may often occaſion it to be extremely detrimental to the perſon who takes it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of OPIUM.

THIS narcotic juice was firſt introduced into practice, as a ſpecific againſt the Lues Venerea, at New York, in America, about the year 1779. It was employed in ſeveral of the military hoſpitals there, where it acquired the reputation of a moſt efficacious remedy; and Dr. Michaelis, phyſician of the Heſſian forces, publiſhed an account of a great number of ſucceſsful experiments made with it, in the firſt volume of the Medical Communications, in the year 1784.

Opium was afterwards given as an anti-venereal remedy in ſome foreign hoſpitals; many trials were alſo made of its virtues, in ſeveral of the London hoſpitals, and in the Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh. Very favourable reports of its efficacy in removing venereal complaints, were publiſhed by different practitioners; but, at the ſame time, ſo many deductions were to be made, and

ſo

ſo many exceptions were to be admitted, that it required little ſagacity to diſcover, that moſt of the advocates for this medicine, repoſed but a ſlender and fluctuating confidence in its antivenereal powers. I made ſeveral experiments on the virtues of Opium in Lues Venerea, at the Lock Hoſpital, in the years 1784 and 1785; and publiſhed a narrative of them in the ſecond volume of the Medical Communications.

The reſult of my experiments was very unfavourable to the credit of this new remedy; and I believe, that no ſurgeon in this country any longer relies on Opium as a ſpecific againſt the venereal virus.* I have been long accuſtomed to adminiſter Opium with great freedom, during the mercurial courſe;

* We have not learned that Opium has been alone a remedy for the venereal diſeaſe; and any experiments that we know to have been made, lead us to conclude, that it is never alone ſufficient for that purpoſe. But from almoſt every experiment made, we are well aſſured of its being of very great uſe in almoſt every circumſtance of the diſeaſe. It moderates and alleviates every ſymptom; and in many of them it will do this without the aſſiſtance of other remedies.

Cullen's Mat. Med. Tom. II. P. 254.

and

and the experience of nearly twenty years has taught me, that when it is combined with mercury, the proper efficacy of the latter is not in any meaſure increaſed: that it would not be ſafe to rely upon a ſmaller quantity of the mineral ſpecific, nor to contract the mercurial courſe within a ſhorter limit, than where no Opium has been employed.

This repreſentation will not, I preſume, admit of controverſy; yet we frequently hear people expreſſing themſelves upon this head, as if Opium manifeſted ſome peculiar qualities in venereal complaints, of a diſtinct nature from its well known narcotic properties, and thus afforded an important aid to mercury in the removal of Lues Venerea. Perhaps it may not be unuſeful to diſentangle this ſubject, from the perplexity in which ſuch indefinite language neceſſarily involves it.

Opium, when given in conjunction with mercury, by diminiſhing the ſenſibility of the ſtomach and bowels, prevents many of thoſe inconveniencies which this mineral is apt to excite in the primæ viæ; and thus its admiſſion into the general ſyſtem is facilitated. Mercury will likewiſe often produce a morbid irritability, accompanied with reſtleſſneſs and inſomnoleſcence;

inſomnoleſcence; and it ſometimes renders venereal ſores painful, and diſpoſed to ſpread. Theſe accidental evils, not neceſſarily connected with the venereal diſeaſe, may be commonly alleviated, and often intirely removed by a judicious adminiſtration of Opium; and the patient will conſequently be enabled to perſiſt in uſing the mineral ſpecific. It muſt however be perfectly obvious, that Opium, in conferring this ſort of relief, communicates no additional virtues to mercury; and that in reality it aſſiſts the conſtitution of the patient, not the operation of the medicine with which it is combined. The ſalutary effects of mercury, as an antidote, may be diminiſhed, or loſt, by the ſupervention of vomiting, dyſentery, &c. Opium will often correct theſe morbid appearances; and ſo will ſpices, wine, an appropriate diet, &c. yet it would be a ſtrange uſe of words, to urge, wherever theſe articles of food were beneficial to a venereal patient, that they concurred in augmenting the medicinal virtues of mercury. It may be ſuppoſed, that the majority of medical men would underſtand by the terms, "to aſſiſt a medicine in curing a contagious "diſeaſe;" that the drug conjoined with the ſpecific,

ſpecific, actually increaſed its medicinal efficacy; whereas, in the inſtances before us, it is the human body only which has been aided to reſiſt the operation of certain noxious powers, which would render a perſeverance in the antidote prejudicial or impoſſible.

The ſoothing qualities of this admirable medicine, can ſcarcely be eſtimated too highly; yet we muſt beware of aſcribing effects to them which have no exiſtence; ſince a confidence in the antivenereal virtues of Opium, would be a ſource of greater miſchief, than its moſt valuable properties would be able to compenſate.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the CICUTA.

WHEN Dr. Storck publiſhed an account of the virtues of Hemlock, he did not confine his encomiums on the medicinal efficacy of that plant, to its power of curing cancers; but he often expreſſed himſelf like a man who had found a ſpecific remedy againſt every kind of diſeaſe. He has accordingly related ſome caſes of Lues Venerea, which were cured by the Cicuta, after every other kind of antivenereal remedy had been tried in vain.* Dr. Collin, who ſucceeded him, offers likewiſe a ſtrong teſtimony of the virtues of the Cicuta, in Lues Venerea.— "Ubi antivenereorum princeps Mercurius "ſublimatus corroſivus, in ſpiritu frumenti "ſolutus, ob nimium jam a Lue Venerea

* Ant. Storck. Lib. II. de Cicuta.
Van Swieten. Comment. in Aph. Boerh. Tom. V. P. 573.
Murray, Apparat. Med. Tom. I.

labefactata

" labefactata viſcera exhiberi nequit, vel " quando aegri illum non ferunt, Cicuta " efficax praebet medicamentum, dolores " leniens, ſopienſque, & ulcera ſanans, & " corpus teterrimo malo feliciter liberans. " De Cicuta efficacia. Cor. IV. P. 153.

The experience of forty years has, however, taught us, that the Cicuta is a medicine which cannot be abſolutely confided in, upon any occaſion. I do not intend to affirm, that it is deſtitute of every uſeful medicinal quality; for I have often found it a very ſerviceable article of the materia medica; and have given it in ſeveral diſeaſes with remarkable advantage; yet it is, at the ſame time, ſo extremely uncertain in its operation, that no man ought to rely upon it for the cure of a dangerous diſeaſe, when he is poſſeſſed of any other appropriate remedy.

The extract, and the powder of Hemlock, may be ſometimes given with evidently good effects, in ſpreading irritable ſores; whether they are connected with the active ſtate of the venereal virus; or when they remain after the completion of the mercurial courſe. And it would ſeem, that the benefit conferred by this drug, ought not to be aſcribed ſolely to its

its anodyne qualities; ſince the ſame advantages cannot always be obtained by the liberal exhibition of Opium, even where it does not diſagree with the ſtomach.

The following inſtances will both illuſtrate and confirm what I have now aſſerted.

About fourteen years ago, two young women were admitted into the Lock Hoſpital on the ſame day, both of them ſuffering from the ſecondary ſymptoms of the Lues Venerea; the moſt troubleſome of which were, large, painful, ſpreading ulcerations, between, and under, the toes of each foot. They immediately began the uſual courſe of mercurial inunction; and the common dreſſings were applied to their feet.

When their conſtitutions were under the full influence of mercury, the other ſymptoms of Lues diſappeared; but theſe ſores remained as large, foul, and painful, as ever. I directed Opium to be given every three or four hours; but no abatement of pain, nor ſign of amendment enſued, although ſix grains of Opium were given in the day. I then ordered, that one of the young women ſhould diſcontinue the Opium, and take five grains of the Extractum Cicutæ three times a day, increaſing

increaſing the doſe five grains each day, till the Hemlock produced ſome giddineſs. When ſhe arrived at fifteen grains of the extract for each doſe, her pains abated, and the ſores began to look better: ſhe perſiſted in taking about one dram every day, and in a fortnight the ſores were perfectly healed. The other young woman continued taking Opium during a week after the firſt had begun with the Cicuta; but, when I obſerved the remarkable advantages which had been gained by giving this laſt medicine, I ordered this patient to take it in the ſame manner as the former; and the beneficial effects reſulting from the change, were equally ſtriking and ſatisfactory.

I do not infer, from ſuch examples as theſe, that Cicuta has the power of removing venereal ſymptoms, when mercury has failed; becauſe, I conceive that theſe ſores had loſt the ſyphilitic character, and owed their duration to a cauſe unconnected with the action of that animal morbiferous poiſon.

The venereal ulcer which attacks the toes at their line of junction with the foot, is always an ill-conditioned ſore, and often becomes gangrenous. As the Cicuta has ſucceeded very well in ſeveral caſes of that kind, I

have been induced to adminiſter it in mortifications produced by other cauſes; and I have obſerved, that where a gangrenous ulcer ſpreads with much pain, where the pulſe is hard and frequent, and where there are no appearances of any remarkable debility, the Cicuta will frequently check the progreſs of the diſeaſe; and will bring the ulcer into a clean granulating ſtate, when no good effects had been obtained from bark, vitriol, cordials, &c. and when even Opium, liberally exhibited, had failed of allaying the pain, and was of no avail in reſtraining the deſtructive progreſs of ſphacelation.

Several other vegetables have been employed at different periods, againſt the Lues Venerea; and each has acquired more or leſs credit as a valuable remedy in different ſtages of the diſeaſe. I ſhall only mention a few of them.

Saſſafras.

Juniperus.

Bardana.

Saponaria.

Saponaria.
Dulcamara.
Juglans.
Lobelia ſyphilitica.
Aſtragalus exſcapus.

The five firſt articles, have no good claim to the title of antivenereal remedies: ſome of them may be occaſionally directed in compound decoctions of the woods; but, whatever may be thought of the ſubordinate utility of each of them, I preſume no perſon will aſſert, from his own experience, that any one of them can be fairly ranked as an antidote againſt Syphilis.

The putamen or green rind of the Walnut, has been celebrated as a powerful antivenereal remedy, for more than a century and a half; and Petrus Borellus has given directions for a decoction not unlike that which is commonly called the Liſbon diet drink, in which the Walnut, with its green bark, forms a principal ingredient.

Lue Venerea affecti, tantis cruciatibus olim vexabantur, ut morbus vere remedio praeſtaret, nunc vero facilè ſequenti remedio curari poſſunt, abſque ſudoribus, abſque ptyaliſmo, *abſque inunctionibus*, liceſque nec

cubili, nec cubiculo immorentur. Modus autem ejuſmodi eſt. Acc. Antimonii & Zarzaparillæ ā ℥vi. Antimonium nodulo incluſum, in ſex aquæ amphoris, in quibus ſit Zarzaparilla cum 40 nucum putaminibus & hylis ſuſpenſum, coq. ad tertias, ejuſque decocto utatur æger, capiendo ter in die, nempe, mane, meridie, & veſperi, hauſtum ejus, ſumendo, longe a cibis.*

Ramazzini, whoſe works were publiſhed early in the preſent century, has likewiſe informed us, that in his time, the green rind of the Walnut was eſteemed a good antivenereal remedy in England. Ex nucum viridi cortice parari decoctum, in Anglia expertæ virtutis ad Luem Gallicam perdomandam, quam *Recentiores* omnes in acidi prædominio ſtatuunt, nuper accepi a Cl. D. Nathan Lacy, Medico Anglo & inſigni Anatomico.†

This part of the Walnut has been much uſed in decoctions, during the laſt fifty years, both in the green and dry ſtate; it has been

* Hiſtor. & Obſerv. rarior Medicophys. Cent. II. Obſ. 96.

† Ramazzini Op. Tom. I. P. 126.

greatly

greatly commended by writers on the continent, as well as by thoſe of our own country: and is, without doubt, a very uſeful addition to the decoction of the woods. I have employed it during many years, in thoſe caſes where pains in the limbs and indurations of the membranes have remained, after the venereal diſeaſe has been cured by mercury; and I have ſeldom directed it without manifeſt advantage.

The decoctum Luſitanicum, cauſes a determination to the ſkin, more certainly than any of the other decoctions commonly employed; but, what ſhare the antimony may have in exciting this perſpiration, I leave to the chymiſts to determine.

Brambilla and Girtanner alſo contend for the antivenereal virtues of the green bark of the Walnut: but the reſult of my own experience will not permit me to add my teſtimony to theirs. I have given it in as large doſes as the ſtomach could retain, and for as long a time as the ſtrength of the patients and the nature of their complaints would permit: but I have uniformly obſerved, that if they who take it be not previouſly cured of Lues Venerea, the peculiar ſymp-

toms will appear, and proceed in their uſual courſe in defiance of the powers of this medicine.

The decoctum Luſitanicum may be given with great advantage, in many of thoſe cutaneous diſeaſes which are attended with aridity of the ſkin;* and I have had ſome opportunities of obſerving, that when the putamen of the Walnut has been omitted, either intentionally, or by accident, the ſame good effects have not followed the taking of the decoction, as when it contained this ingredient.

Many years ago, I made ſome trials of a decoction of the Lobelia ſyphilitica: but it generally diſagreed with the ſtomach, and ſeldom failed of affecting the bowels, as a ſtrong cathartic. Theſe effects were inconvenient and prejudicial; and, as I could not obſerve that the perſons who took it derived any evident benefit from it, as an antidote, I ſoon deſiſted from employing it.

* Hunczouſky, has recommended a decoction of the green bark of the Walnut, as a good application to ulcers. Act. Acad. Vind. P. 209.

Van

Van Swieten,* who has mentioned the antivenereal qualities of this root, upon the authority of one of his reſpectable correſpondents, obſerves, in concluding his account of it,—ſed & illud remedium evacuando curat. This great man had adopted a theory, which required, as a ſine qua non, that antivenereal remedies ſhould be evacuants of ſome kind; and, having learnt from his friend, that the Lobelia ſyphilitica could act as an emetic, a purgative, and a diaphoretic, he admitted it as an antidote, without making one experiment himſelf. A conſiderable quantity of this root was brought into England, at the time when I employed it in the Lock Hoſpital; but, as no accounts have been publiſhed of its efficacy, I may preſume, that the trials of other practitioners were attended with no more ſucceſs than my own.†

* Comment. Tom. V. P. 576.

† The Lobelia Syphilitca has never acquired the confidence of medical practitioners in Europe; for Murray obſerves,—"Pauciſſima experimenta in Europa "cum eadem capta. Quod mirum; quum neque "cultura ſtirpis difficilis ſit, neque radicum illaeſarum "tranſlatio.

App. Med. Tom. I. P. 776.

The Aſtragalus exſcapus has been ſtrongly recommended, as an antivenereal, by Profeſſor Winterl of Buda, by Dr. Storck, Dr. Quarin, Dr. Crichton, and Dr. Girtanner.* A decoction of this root is ſaid to act as a purgative and diaphoretic; and to cure the ſecondary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea, in caſes where no mercury has been previouſly employed. I muſt acknowledge, that the accounts which I have read of its antivenereal powers, have by no means produced a conviction in my mind, of its meriting the character it has obtained. I never employed it; and, until ſome more deciſive evidence of its ſafety and efficacy be made public, I ſhall not ſubject my patients to the hazard of experiments, which, if not attended with real and permanent advantage, may inflict irremediable miſchief.

I would by no means however offer any ſuggeſtions with a view of diſcrediting the accounts that have been publiſhed of the virtues of the Aſtragalus exſcapus, ſince I cannot produce any evidence collected from my own obſervations: but ſome portion of

* Quarin. Animad. Præt. Cap. XVI. Med. Journal. Vol. IX.

ſcepticiſm

ſcepticiſm may perhaps be tolerated in a perſon, whoſe experiments made with a variety of vegetable remedies in Lues Venerea, and ſuch as have been recommended by the moſt reſpectable authorities, have proved uniformly unſucceſsful.*

* Murray informs his readers, that the Aſtragalus exſcapus has not maintained its reputation with all thoſe phyſicians who at firſt gave a favourable report of its efficacy.

Appar. Med. Tom. II. P. 472.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the AMMONIA PRÆPARATA.

THE Volatile Alkali was recommended as a potent and certain remedy againſt Lues Venerea, by Monſieur Peyrilhe, more than twenty years ago: and this phyſician extolled it as a medicine of greater efficacy than mercury; always curing the diſeaſe, without injuring the health of thoſe who took it. An interval of ten years intervened between the publication of the firſt and ſecond edition of his work upon this ſubject; during this large portion of time, he and his medical friends were making frequent trials of the virtues of the new remedy he had introduced; he found his firſt reports confirmed by an ample number of ſubſequent experiments, and thus gained additional evidence of the efficacy of this preparation. Such are the authorities upon which the Volatile Alkali was confidently propoſed

propoſed to the world, as a new and certain ſpecific againſt Syphilis.*

The work which details an account of this hitherto unknown quality of the Ammonia præparata, diſcloſes likewiſe ſome curious and uncommon opinions; but the author has ſo mingled the various parts of his hypotheſis, with the deſcription of the diſeaſe and its ſymptoms, that it is not always eaſy to diſcover, when M. Peyrilhe is indulging the ſallies of a brilliant imagination, and when he is deſcribing the order, progreſs, and connexion of real phenomena.

The following account of the efficacy of this new remedy, I give in the words of the author: — Nous avons vu cèder aſſez conſtamment à l'action de l'Alkali volatil, plus ou moins ſoutenue, les gonorrhées virulentes ſimples des deux ſexes, les chancres, les bubons, les exoſtoſes fauſſes, dont le tiſſu cellulaire n'a pas entiérement perdu ſon organiſation, les duretès lymphatiques des corps caverneux, certains eſpèces de rétention d'urine, tous les ſymptômes dépendans de la cachexie vénérienne, maux de tête gravatifs,

* Remede nouveau contre les Maladies Veneriennes.

foibleſſe

foibleſſe d'eſtomac, fleurs blanches ſuſpectes, puſtules, dartres, douleurs vagues des membres, douleurs nocturnes, & même, à notre grand étonnement, des engorgemens de la matrice durs, douloureux, ſuppurés, & quelques-uns réputés ſquirrheux. P. 27, 28.

The author informs his readers, in other parts of his work, that the preſence of Scrofula, or Scurvy, in an infected perſon, conſtitutes no obſtacle to the cure of the Lues Venerea, when the new remedy is employed; and, what may ſeem ſtill more extraordinary, that the Volatile Alkali is better adapted to the cure of the diſeaſe in its more advanced ſtages, than when the infection is recent.

This learned writer farther maintains, that the Lues Venerea muſt be cured by exciting a fever; that mercury, by its peculiar ſtimulus, can produce the proper febrile ſtate of the ſyſtem, but that the Volatile Alkali is preferable to it: and he confidently affirms, that an inflammatory fever, has many times radically cured the moſt ſerious and inveterate venereal complaints.* P. 75.

I have

* This opinion did not originate with M. Peyrilhe; it occurs in a work publiſhed by Jacobus Vercellonus, in

I have no intention of entering largely into a diſcuſſion of the merits of this theory; my firſt object is, to ſtate the reſult of my own experience of the virtues of Volatile Alkali, as an antivenereal remedy.

Many years before I read M. Peyrilhe's work, I had been accuſtomed to give Volatile Alkali, in large doſes, to ſuch venereal patients as ſuffered ſeverely from the dolores oſtocopi; and the medicine was very often uſeful to them; but I never ſuſpected it of poſſeſſing the important quality of an antidote to the virus. After I became acquainted with the opinions maintained in that work, I paid more attention to the effects of the Ammonia; and no long ſpace of time elapſed, before I obſerved, that like other diaphoretic medicines,

in 1722, intitled De Pudendorum morbis et Lue Venerea.

" Febris Lui Venereæ ſuperveniens morbum ſolvit. " Teſtatur hoc continua experientia." — After giving ſome inſtances in confirmation of this doctrine, he adds, " Et ego equidem ſanatæ Luis nullum certius habeo " indicium ipſa febre, quæ uſum pharmacorum exce- " perit, ita nimirum, ut quum aegrum Ephemerâ aliquâ " laborantem invenio, ſtatim denunciem ipſum à Lue " integre convaluiſſe. P. 224—5.

ſuch

ſuch as Antimony, Pulvis Ipecacuanhæ compoſitus, Antimony combined with Opium, Warm-bathing, &c. it ſuſpended the progreſs of ſome venereal ſymptoms, and removed others; but that no permanent benefit was obtained by uſing it.

The Volatile Alkali will often relieve pains of the limbs; it will ſometimes remove a venereal eruption; and even reſtrain for a time the progreſs of the diſeaſe: but, at other times, the virus will continue its deſtructive courſe, during the adminiſtration of this medicine; and the ſymptoms which were apparently cured, never fail of returning again, while the patient is actually perſiſting in taking full doſes of this pretended ſpecific.

CASE THE EIGHTH.

A young gentleman had a large chancre on the preputium, for which he employed mercury during eighteen days. As the ſore was then completely healed, he abſolutely refuſed to perſiſt any longer in uſing his medicines, and went into the country. At the expiration of about three months, he informed

informed me by a letter, that he was become very lame; that his ankles ſwelled much every night; and that he had nearly loſt the uſe of one arm. I expreſſed my ſuſpicions to him, that thoſe complaints were venereal; but, as he would not come to London at that time, I adviſed him to go into a hot bath. He bathed only twice, and was ſo intirely relieved, that he concluded himſelf to be quite well. In about a month after this apparent recovery, he came to town, and complained of pains, reſembling the rheumatiſm, in every limb; the tumefaction of the ankles had appeared again; but he was very unwilling to believe that his caſe was venereal. I ordered him to take two drams of the Spiritus Salis Ammoniaci, properly diluted, every day; and in about ten days his ſymptoms were removed. In a fortnight, the œdema returned; he became very lame, and venereal eruptions appeared on the ſkin. I then inſiſted upon his having recourſe to mercury immediately; by which he was cured in the uſual ſpace of time.

CASE

CASE THE NINTH.

A gentleman ſhewed me a ſwelling of the perioſteum, at the upper part of the tibia, which I told him was a venereal node. The hiſtory he gave of himſelf was ſuch as to render the correctneſs of my opinion ſomewhat doubtful; and, as he was very confident that his caſe was not a venereal one, I conſented to treat it as a tumour derived from ſome other ſource. I gave him the Volatile Alkali in large doſes, during a fortnight; and applied a bliſtering plaſter to the part affected; but no advantage was gained. I then directed him to take Opium and Antimony. He found ſome relief from theſe medicines; and his pain was greatly mitigated; but he was never quite eaſy, except while under the influence of Opium. After perſiſting in experiments of this kind during four or five weeks, I at length prevailed on him to make trial of mercury. He ſoon obtained permanent benefit from the adminiſtration of this remedy; and, after paſſing through a regular courſe of it, he was perfectly cured.

I have

I have likewiſe given the Ammonia præparata, in the quantity of from two drams to half an ounce every day, to patients afflicted with venereal pains and nodes, (which are the very caſes in which M. Peyrilhe maintains that it is the moſt efficacious,) but the advantages have been merely temporary. I have ordered the diſeaſed perſon to lie conſtantly in bed, and to drink plentifully of a decoction of Guaiacum, at the ſame time; yet, under theſe favourable circumſtances, although ſome relief was obtained for the ſpace of ten days or a fortnight, new ſymptoms always made their appearance, and thoſe for which the medicine were given, never failed to increaſe, during the time of employing it.

I meet with ſome inſtances every year, of nodes of the perioſteum, ſituated on the tibia, and ſometimes on the bones of the upper extremities, accompanied with much pain, diſturbing the ſleep, and impeding the motion of the limb; but which are nevertheleſs quite unconnected with Syphilis. Theſe tumours generally yield to the application of bliſtering plaſters, conjoined with the uſe of ſudorific medicines. I have often given the Volatile Alkali to ſuch patients, with evident advan-

tage; and I have ſeen effects equally beneficial produced by Guaiacum, and by the Decoctum Lignorum. Nor is it at all extraordinary, that ſtimulating medicines, and irritating applications, ſhould prove ſerviceable in reducing the tumefactions I have deſcribed, ſince they commonly occur in patients of a ſcrofulous habit of body.

That a fever excited by nature, or by art, will radically cure the venereal diſeaſe, is a propoſition of too much conſequence to be diſmiſſed, without offering ſome obſervations upon it.

1. A Gonorrhœa is ſometimes accompanied with febrile ſymptoms, at its firſt appearance; but this ſtate of the body is ſo far from contributing to the removal of the malady, that it generally forms a material obſtacle to our adopting the beſt mode of treating it; conſequently, it is not every kind of fever which has the power even of ſuſpending venereal complaints.

2. I know that a fever will ſometimes ſuſpend the progreſs of a Gonorrhœa; but I never ſaw an inſtance in which it completely removed it. Mr. Hunter relates, that he has ſeen all the ſymptoms of a Gonorrhœa

ceaſe

ceaſe on the acceſſion of a fever, and return when the fever has been ſubdued.

" So capricious ſometimes, (ſays this uſeful " writer,) is this form of the diſeaſe, in its " cure, that the acceſſion of an accidental " fever has ſtopped the diſcharge, the pain in " making water has ceaſed, and the Gonorrhœa " has finally terminated with the fever. In " ſome I have ſeen a Gonorrhœa begin mildly, " but a ſevere fever coming on, and con- " tinuing for ſeveral days, has greatly in- " creaſed the ſymptoms, and on the fever " going off, the Gonorrhœa has alſo gone " off."*

To know the proportion which the different caſes would bear to each other, in which the Gonorrhœa has been only ſuſpended by a fever; or in which it has been cured by a fever; or where no particular interruption to its uſual progreſs has occurred, from the ſupervention of a febrile complaint, would be a curious, and perhaps, an uſeful acquiſition. It is not probable, however, that we can gain this knowledge in a ſhort period of time, ſince the number of perſons in whom theſe

* Hunter on the Venereal Diſeaſe. P. 85.

two diſorders happen to be blended, is comparatively ſmall.

My own experience has however been ſufficient to inſtruct me, that a Gonorrhœa may proceed, where there is general inflammation; where there is an Ague; and during the long progreſs of a Typhus; without gaining any amelioration of its ſymptoms. On the contrary, in thoſe ſeveral inſtances, the diſeaſe was rendered more untractable, and reſiſted the efforts of the common remedies with peculiar obſtinacy.

3. I have ſeen a great number of perſons who were afflicted with the Lues Venerea, paſs through violent fevers; inflammatory complaints; the diſeaſes ſometimes conſequent to parturition; the ſmall pox, &c. yet not a ſingle inſtance has ever occurred to me, in which the patient derived any real and permanent benefit from the acceſſion of theſe ſeveral morbid affections. I do not deny,

* That change in the female conſtitution which is connected with pregnancy, has often a wonderful power of ſuſpending the progreſs, and of modifying the form of the diſeaſe. An account of theſe, and of ſome other curious phenomena, will appear in my Treatiſe on the Lues Venerea.

that

that a temporary ſuſpenſion of the progreſs of ſome particular ſymptom may have been obſervable; but I aſſert that no true and eſſential alteration in the active powers of the virus, was ever effected by the ſupervention of ſuch acute diſeaſes as I have mentioned.

CASE THE TENTH.

The following caſe offers a curious example of the irregularity with which the Lues Venerea ſometimes proceeds.

A married woman applied to me at the Diſpenſary in Carey Street, with a large and painful node, which was ſituated about the middle of the tibia. The account ſhe gave me of the origin and progreſs of her complaint was ſo imperfect and obſcure, that I could not immediately decide upon the true nature of it. As her ſleep was greatly interrupted, and ſhe ſuffered conſtantly from pain in her leg, I ordered her to take Antimony and Opium; and directed a bliſtering plaſter to be applied on the tumour. The part was bliſtered repeatedly; ſhe took Volatile Alkali, Decoction of Guaiacum, Decoction of Mezereum,

and opiates, in ſuch doſes as to mitigate the pain; but ſhe obtained no permanent benefit from this courſe of treatment. I then ordered her to rub in a dram of the ſtrong mercurial ointment every night. When ſhe had uſed but four drams, and before her mouth was ſenſibly affected, ſhe became ill, with the ſymptoms of a common fever; which rendered it proper for her to diſcontinue the frictions. The febrile complaint was nearly gone at the end of a week; and at that period a great number of ſmall boils appeared upon different parts of her body. She now became quite free from the pain of the node; the tumefaction ſubſided gradually; and, by taking Peruvian bark and Caſcarilla during a ſhort time, ſhe regained her health, and ſeemed perfectly freed from her former complaint.

This woman remained well during ſix months; but, at the end of that time, the node appeared again, attended with pain as before. She was relieved by taking the Corroſive Sublimate; but her ſituation in life obliging her to go into an hoſpital, I ſaw her no more.

I feel myſelf very little intereſted in the theories which may be propoſed, of the *modus agendi* of Volatile Alkali, or of any other medicine;

medicine; provided ſuch ſpeculations do not corrupt the hiſtory of the diſeaſe, nor ſanction an inadequate, or pernicious mode of treating it.

But, if it were to become a prevailing opinion, that a fever being the cure of Lues Venerea, whatever medicine could excite and ſupport a febrile commotion in the human frame, would operate as a ſpecific remedy in the cure of that diſeaſe; ſuch a propoſition, reduced into practice, would be attended with the moſt miſchievous conſequences.

The preceding pages contain ample proofs, that certain medicines have a power of interrupting the progreſs, and of altering the appearances of venereal ſymptoms, without actually curing the diſeaſe; hence it is probable, that mutations in the ſtate of the ſyſtem, of different kinds, whether occaſioned by the efforts of nature, or produced by general diſeaſes, may modify the action of the venereal virus, ſometimes to the advantage, and at other times to the diſadvantage of the patient.

To be acquainted with theſe circumſtances, as matters of fact, will be highly uſeful to every practical ſurgeon; yet, if any one ſhould

undertake to model a ſyſtem upon ſuch anomalies and unuſual occurrences; or ſhould ſlight or diſparage a well known and efficacious method of treating the diſeaſe, becauſe it may lie within the ſphere of poſſibilities, that a commotion (not to be defined) excited in the animal body, can remove certain appearances ſeemingly connected with the infection; it may be fairly queſtioned, whether the underſtanding, or the probity of ſuch a perſon be moſt worthy of animadverſion.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

OF THE

TERRA PONDEROSA SALITA,

OR

BARYTES MURIATA.

THIS ſaline compound was firſt prepared and recommended as an uſeful medicine, by the late Dr. Crawford: and an account of its virtues in cancerous and ſcrofulous affections was publiſhed by him, in the ſecond volume of the London Medical Communications.

It would be inconſiſtent with the deſign of this work, to recite the obſervations I have made on the properties and effects of this preparation, in the great variety of caſes in which I have employed it, ſince it was firſt introduced into public notice. My preſent plan reſtricts my account of it, to its efficacy in Syphilis. I never adminiſtered it indeed under the character of an antivenereal medicine; but I have given it with great advantage,

tage, on certain occaſions, when I could not determine poſitively, whether the caſe were venereal or not; and where the diſeaſe has afterwards manifeſted itſelf by unequivocal ſymptoms. The following caſe will preſent a ſpecimen of its powers.

CASE THE ELEVENTH.

A gentleman had undergone three full courſes of mercury, under the direction of different ſurgeons; and, from the length and ſeverity of the laſt of theſe courſes, it was preſumed that he was cured. He firſt conſulted me, in conſequence of the appearance of a tumour on the frontal bone, and a little ſore on the Septum Naſi; at the ſame time, he ſhewed me a ſmall fiſſure in the roof of his mouth, where, on examination with a probe, I found the bone uncovered.

As his health had ſuffered greatly from mercury, and he had been ſo lately under the influence of it, I ordered him to take twelve drops of the Muriated Barytes, three times a day. When he had perſevered in taking this medicine during a month, the node

node had diſappeared; the ſore on the Septum Naſi was healed; and I thought that the fiſſure remaining in the roof of the mouth, depended ſolely upon the irritation excited by a piece of carious bone, and that it would cloſe when the exfoliation was completed.

Nevertheleſs, while my patient was actually taking this medicine with the greateſt regularity, the ulcer in the noſe opened again, and ſpread rapidly; the node returned upon the forehead; venereal tubercles appeared on different parts of his body; and his health became ſo materially diſordered, that I thought it dangerous to delay the adminiſtering of mercury any longer. The gentleman now uſed a full and efficacious mercurial courſe, and he has, ever ſince that time, remained perfectly well.

I have frequently given the Muriated Barytes to patients afflicted with painful and ill-conditioned ſores, derived from a venereal ſource, and it has ſometimes proved beneficial, by improving the health, by increaſing the tone of the ſtomach, and diſpoſing the ulcers to heal.

Profeſſor Gmelin recites the good effects he has ſeen of the efficacy of this medicine, in the following words:—Commendarunt alii hoc

hoc medicamen in exanthematibus chronicis pertinacibus; v. g. tinea, lichenibus, ſcabie; in ulceribus, ac bubonibus, aliiſque malis venereis, experti ſunt efficacem Althof, et apud eum Huber et Vogel."*—

The Muriated Barytes ought by no means to be regarded as a medicine void of efficacy. When it is properly prepared, it has the power of ſuſpending, for a ſhort time, the progreſs of certain venereal ſymptoms, eſpecially thoſe which are ſituated in the ligaments, or the perioſteum: and it is often ſerviceable in Scrofula, and in Ulcers connected with Elephantiaſis. But theſe good qualities are uncertain in their operation, and narrowly circumſcribed; nor is it a preparation on which great confidence can be placed, for the cure of any diſeaſe with which I am acquainted.

* Appar. Med. P. II. Tom. I. P. 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

OF CERTAIN

PREPARATIONS OF MERCURY.

THOSE who are perſuaded of the exiſtence of antivenereal virtues in all, or in any of thoſe articles of the materia medica which have been mentioned in the preceding pages, probably, may not deem the facts therein recited, ſuch as to require them to yield up the opinions they have formed.

They may contend, ſince I have conceded the power of ſuſpending the progreſs of Syphilis, and of conferring a temporary benefit at leaſt, upon venereal patients, to the greater part of the medicines taken notice of, that this conceſſion amounts to an acknowledgment of their ſpecific qualities; and that, if they really do good, and ſucceſsfully oppoſe the deſtructive progreſs of the virus, though with certain limitations, they may, when conjoined with Mercury, increaſe its

its medicinal virtue, and give more certainty to its action on the animal ſyſtem.

It may likewiſe be alleged farther, that the very ſame ſpecies of arguing which I have conſidered as valid, when employed againſt the ſpecific efficacy of the various medicines taken from the vegetable, mineral, or animal kingdoms, may be retorted with equal advantage againſt the certain efficacy of Mercury, in venereal complaints; ſince relapſes often occur, where that antidote has been employed; and inſtances frequently preſent themſelves, where new venereal ſymptoms appear, during the continuance of a mercurial courſe.

There is much truth contained in theſe allegations; and it can excite no ſurpriſe, if perſons poſſeſſed of few opportunities of comparing the medicinal powers of Mercury, with thoſe of other remedies, ſhould be induced to conclude, that facts like theſe, very fairly deprive Mercury of its excluſive claim to the rank of ſole ſpecific againſt the Lues Venerea.

In replying to theſe objections, I would premiſe, that Mercury adminiſtered in any form, or after any method, or under any circumſtances

circumſtances which ignorance or caprice may ſuggeſt, is not a certain antidote, that is, an infallible remedy, againſt Lues Venerea. When this medicine is under the direction of an unſkilful man, it will fail of effecting a cure, perhaps more frequently than it will ſucceed; and, what is of conſiderable conſequence to the welfare of the diſeaſed perſon, the complaint will be generally exaſperated by it, and rendered more untractable, than if no Mercury at all had been given.

A long courſe of obſervation has convinced me, that if this alarming truth were as clearly underſtood, and as deeply impreſſed upon mens' minds, as it deſerves to be, the great number of mutilated victims, whoſe ſad condition excites horror, while it calls for commiſeration, would be reduced within much narrower limits than I can venture to expreſs.

Indeed, I am ſo far from feeling alarmed or perplexed, at the examples of ill ſucceſs which occaſionally attend the exhibition of Mercury, or from conſidering theſe miſadventures as reflecting diſparagement or diſgrace on that mineral, that I am rather

ſurpriſed

ſurpriſed at the ſucceſs which ſo often attends the indiſcriminate uſe of it.

There is a deſcription of men who ſcatter abroad their crudities very liberally, in compendiums and eſſays; a claſs of productions, ſeldom calculated to convey information, but principally deſigned to perform the office of a midwife, by bringing their compilers into public view. With the ſpurious intelligence collected from theſe retailers of ſcraps, many people furniſh themſelves with a ſtock ſufficient to undertake the cure of their own complaints; and, not uncommonly, impart the precious commodity to others who are leſs learned than themſelves.

That Mercury, conducted by men of ſuch endowments, ſhould often fail of doing good, nay, that it ſhould frequently inflict great miſchief, would be according to the natural order of things: but, that it ſhould ever prove finally beneficial, ought certainly to redound to the credit of a medicine, whoſe ſalutary agency cannot be invariably fruſtrated by all the blunders of hardy ignorance.

Before attempting, therefore, to calculate the proportion of relapſes which occur where

Mercury

Mercury has been employed, it will be equitable to make the following deductions:

1. Of all thoſe inſtances in which that medicine has been injudiciouſly, or abſurdly adminiſtered.

2. Let all thoſe caſes be ſubtracted, where the circumſtances and ſituation of the patient would not permit a ſtrict compliance with the neceſſary reſtrictions; alſo all thoſe in which an inconſiderate, a prejudiced, or a refractory diſpoſition, have refuſed ſubmiſſion to the injunctions of the ſurgeon; and it will appear, that the charge of not exterminating the diſeaſe, can very ſeldom indeed be juſtly imputed to that mineral.

The ſuperior efficacy of Mercury, as the genuine antidote of Syphilis, is ſanctioned by the experience of 300 years; and, what is a circumſtance deſerving of conſideration, not one medicine beſides, derived from the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, has maintained its credit, with men actually employed in extenſive practice, during a tenth part of that period. Perhaps, it would not be raſh to aſſert, that no other medicine has maintained a general good reputation, as a ſpecific againſt

the venereal diſeaſe, beyond the life-time of its firſt propoſer.

Men may amuſe themſelves by declaiming againſt Mercury, as an uncertain remedy; they may utter querulous details of its baneful effects, and retail tragical ſtories of its malignant influence on the body and mind of thoſe who uſe it: but ſurely all this turbulent eloquence may be directed with equal advantage, not only againſt every potent article of the materia medica, but againſt the very aliment by which we are ſuſtained.

Almoſt every department of phyſical ſcience contains propoſitions which require exceptions, or againſt which objections may be brought that ſcarcely admit of a ſatisfactory ſolution. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe, philoſophers do not ſuppoſe it neceſſary to abandon duly verified axioms, becauſe a few phenomena, not perfectly underſtood, ſeem to militate againſt them.

He who ſhall diſcard all general rules, becauſe they admit exceptions, ought likewiſe for the ſake of conſiſtency, to renounce all ſcience, becauſe human knowledge is fallible and imperfect.

My

My opportunities of adminiſtering Mercury, have not extended to leſs than twenty thouſand caſes; and I feel myſelf fully authorized to aſſert, that it is a remedy always to be confided in, under every form of Lues Venerea; and, where we have only that one diſeaſe to contend with, that it is a certain antidote, and as ſafe in its operation as any other active medicine, drawn from the vegetable, or the mineral kingdom. Let me not be miſunderſtood here, as if I meant to ſay, that it is a certain and ſafe remedy in the hands of any one who undertakes to diſpenſe it. Quite the contrary:—for a multitude of indiſputable proofs might be adduced, that ignorance and error often render it one of the moſt precarious and miſchievous medicines in uſe.

It is not my deſign, at this time, to enter into a detailed account of the powers of Mercury, as an antivenereal remedy: I ſhall reſtrict myſelf to offering a few practical obſervations, on the efficacy of certain preparations, of that mineral, and more eſpecially on that called Hydrargyrus Muriatus.

A ſolution of Mercury in the Marine Acid, has been long known as a chymical preparation; but it is not eaſy to aſcertain who

it was that firſt gave it as an antidote in Syphilis.

M. Le Begue du Preſle, aſſigns this honour to Baſil Valentine; whether correctly or not, is a queſtion of ſmall importance at preſent: this however is certain, that it was employed early in the ſeventeenth century, in England; ſince Richard Wiſeman has deſcribed it as a medicine poſſeſſing ſome reputation in his time, although he never thought proper to adminiſter it in his own practice.

Dr. Turner has informed us, that ſome of his contemporaries were accuſtomed to give the Corroſive Sublimate, as a medicine capable of curing the Gonorrhœa very expeditiouſly; and he declaims, in a torrent of coarſe, petulant, and illiberal language, againſt the preparation, and thoſe who employed it.*

The Muriated Mercury was finally introduced into general practice, on the very reſpectable authority of Baron Van Swieten,

* One Sintelaer, in a work, entitled, "The Scourge "of Venus and Mercury," publiſhed at the beginning of this century, ſpeaks of the frequent exhibition of Corroſive Sublimate, and condemns it as an unſafe preparation.

who

who recommended it as a preparation of ſingular efficacy, againſt every form of the Lues Venerea. This eminent phyſician directed it to be given in ſmaller doſes than had been uſual before his time; and he likewiſe furniſhed thoſe who adopted the uſe of this powerful medicine, with many neceſſary and uſeful cautions.

There are indeed ſome circumſtances which induce me to ſuppoſe, that the Corroſive Sublimate had been employed as an antivenereal remedy in Ruſſia, before its general introduction into other parts of Europe; and that, probably, Van Swieten derived his knowledge of the ſafety and efficacy with which it might be given in ſmall doſes, from Dr. Sanchez, who reſided many years at Peterſburgh. The deciſion of this point, is however an object of no moment in my preſent inquiry.

We are informed by Baron Van Swieten, that three hundred venereal patients were cured by the Corroſive Sublimate, in the year 1754: that all theſe perſons remained well in 1755; and that two hundred more inſtances of ſucceſs were added to the liſt.

De Haen adds his teſtimony, in confirmation of the efficacy of this mercurial

ſalt; and Dr. Locher, who had the care of an hoſpital at Vienna, appropriated to the reception of venereal patients, has recorded nearly five thouſand caſes, in which the Hydrargyrus Muriatus had been adminiſtered with ſucceſs.

The three firſt volumes of the London Medical Obſervations and Inquiries, exhibit a numerous and reſpectable liſt of teſtimonies, in favour of the antivenereal powers of this medicine; and the permanence of the ſeveral cures, is confirmed by atteſtations, which bear the moſt unequivocal characters of authenticity.

The high authority of Van Swieten in the province of medicine, induced medical practitioners, in the ſeveral parts of Europe, to try the efficacy of Corroſive Sublimate in venereal caſes; and it may be ſufficient to ſay, that the favourable reports tranſmitted by them, of its excellent qualities, would fill a volume of conſiderable magnitude.

M. Gardane of Montpelier, in a work publiſhed in the year 1774, contends earneſtly for the unqueſtionable efficacy of this mercurial ſalt, both in the primary and ſecondary ſtages of Lues Venerea; and declares himſelf incapable of comprehending, how a medi-

cine

cine ſhall poſſeſs the virtue of removing venereal ſymptoms very quickly, and yet be unequal to the perfect extermination of the diſeaſe itſelf.*

M. De Horne, who was directed by the French government to make a ſeries of experiments, for the purpoſe of aſcertaining the comparative efficacy of the different preparations of Mercury in Syphilis, has added his teſtimony to the invariable efficacy of the Corroſive Sublimate; and has expreſſed himſelf ſatisfied that the cures performed under his inſpection were real and permanent.†

Domenico Cirillo, a practitioner of ſome eminence at Naples, adviſes the employing of Corroſive Sublimate, in preference to every other preparation of Mercury, in a work publiſhed by him in 1784.‡ His method is, to mix this ſalt with hogs-lard, and to make the frictions on the ſoles of the feet; which is

* Recherches pratiques ſur les differentes manieres de traiter les Maladiés Veneriennes.

† Obſervations faites & publiées par ordre du gouvernment, ſur les differentes méthodes d'adminiſtrer le Mercure dans les Maladies Vénériennes. 1779.

‡ Oſſervazioni pratiche intorno alla Lue Venerea.

a mode of removing Lues Venerea, according to this writer, milder, and leſs uncertain, than any other in general uſe.—The ointment is prepared by mixing one dram of Muriated Mercury, previouſly diſſolved in an aqueous Solution of Sal Ammoniac, with one ounce of hogs-lard. Half a dram of this ointment muſt be rubbed into the ſole of each foot, on three ſucceſſive evenings; then, three more frictions, each conſiſting of a dram and a half of the ointment, muſt be employed in the ſame manner; and finally, two drams of the ointment are to be rubbed in every night, until the patient be cured. The patient muſt alſo go into a warm bath, once every three or four days. Dr. Cirillo is averſe to the exciting of a ptyaliſm; and he aſſures us, that by his method, the mouth is ſeldom made ſore, the Mercury operating principally on the kidnies and ſkin.

Thoſe who are but little acquainted with medical records and reports, would probably conclude, from ſuch a chain of reſpectable evidence, that nothing more could be wanting, to eſtabliſh the credit of Corroſive Sublimate, as an antivenereal remedy of ſuperior efficacy. Nevertheleſs, this is ſo far from agreeing

agreeing with the actual ſtate of things, that I am fully perſuaded, there is no man in this country who has any large ſhare of reputation to loſe, who would venture to ſtake his character upon the certain efficacy of this mercurial preparation alone, where it would have to contend with the ſecondary ſymptoms of the Lues Venerea.

Various trials of the medicinal virtues of the Muriated Mercury, have been made in this country, within the laſt ſixty or ſeventy years, the reſults of which do not accord with the foregoing narrative.

Mr. Bromfeild employed it in the early part of his practice, and "found that it could "not be depended on." His opinion was confirmed, "by the ample experience of a "gentleman who had long been diſtinguiſhed "as one of the moſt eminent of his profeſſion, "in the treatment of the venereal diſeaſe."* —Mr. Bromfeild then proceeds, "The au- "thorities of late were ſo great concerning "its ſucceſs in the Lues Venerea, that we

* I have ſome reaſons for believing that this gentleman was the late Mr. Sainthill.

"were

" were determined to give it another trial in " the Lock Hoſpital."—I ſhall not tranſcribe the whole narrative of his proceedings, as it will be ſufficient to ſay, that it did not ſucceed in thoſe caſes where the ſyſtem was contaminated.

Comparative trials were alſo made of the efficacy of the Salt, and " of Crude Mer- " cury divided with Conſerve of Roſes:—the " effects of this medicine were the ſame, in " removing the ſymptoms, as the Corroſive " Sublimate. To others, a grain of Calomel " was given every night: the complaints as " ſuddenly diſappeared, as where the two " other medicines had been given. The " Mercurius Calcinatus was taken, a grain " or two every night, and the patients were " as ſoon relieved, as by either of the former " medicines.—From the above account it " is plain, that the ſpecific quality of the " Corroſive Sublimate is only as a mercurial, " and that it cannot be depended on in vene- " real complaints, where the blood is conta- " minated; yet if novelty will recommend " it to the favour of any, it is certainly as " ſafe, and equally efficacious with Mercury

" in

" in any other ſhape, given in very ſmall " quantities."*

The late Mr. Gataker's obſervations coincide, in general, with Mr. Bromfeild's. " It may " be unneceſſary," ſays he, " to obſerve that " the Solution of Sublimate was given for- " merly for the cure of venereal complaints, " and that the uſe of it was almoſt intirely " laid aſide, 'till Van Swieten communicated " an account of his ſucceſs by giving it diſ- " ſolved in ſpirits."—" In conſequence of " this account, ſtrengthened by the recom- " mendation of very eminent phyſicians of " this country, the ſolution of Corroſive " Sublimate ſoon began to be in common uſe " for venereal complaints; and the effects " of it at firſt appeared ſo favourable, as to " induce ſome to believe that it would ſuper- " ſede the neceſſity of a ſalivation on all " occaſions.—The reſult of further and more " general experience has however deſtroyed " this hope. In obſtinate caſes, it will ſome- " times fail even to procure a temporary " relief of the ſymptoms, and it is a general " obſervation, and too well founded, that in

* P. 81.

" many

" many caſes, where it ſeems to have anſwered " remarkably well, there is not a ſufficient " reliance on the permanency of the cure, " the ſymptoms being very apt to return."*

M. Louis, whoſe chirurgical erudition, and great eminence in his profeſſion, render his teſtimony upon this ſubject highly reſpectable, expreſſes himſelf thus:—Je l'ai adminiſtré avec ſoin, je l'ai vû donner par d'habiles gens, & il n'a jamais guéri que les perſonnes qui auroient reçu un plus prompt ſoulagement de toute autre preparation mercurielle.—Parallele des Traitemens, &c. P. 172.

It may probably adminiſter occaſion of ſurpriſe to thoſe who are but little verſed in inquiries of this kind, that ſuch oppoſition of teſtimony ſhould prevail, on a ſubject where, it muſt be preſumed, the opportunities of reducing opinion to certainty, are perpetually preſenting themſelves.

In comparing the evidence given by the reſpective writers, ſome allowance ought no doubt to be made for diverſity of climate; various modes of living; peculiarity of temperament; and other local and circumſtantial differences,

* Gataker's Eſſays.

which

which may poſſibly, in ſome meaſure, modify the operation of the remedy. But, when every fair deduction and qualification has been admitted, ſo much direct contradiction will nevertheleſs remain, that any attempt to reconcile the jarring reports we have recited, would be abſurd and impracticable.

It were deſirable to arrive at ſomething definitive, upon a queſtion of ſuch importance as that under diſcuſſion; yet it would ſavour too much of arrogance, for any individual to preſume that his opinion could be ſufficient to make the balance preponderate. I ſhall therefore avoid the endleſs and unſatisfactory mode of collecting ſuffrages, or of balancing teſtimonies, and adopt a more eaſy and ſimple ſtandard of truth; by referring to the general practice of men of acknowledged ability in the profeſſion, and ſuch as have had the moſt extenſive opportunities of appreciating the virtues of this medicine.

In adopting this method, I feel myſelf well warranted in aſſerting, that ſurgeons do not commonly rely upon the Muriated Mercury for the cure of the venereal diſeaſe in their private practice; and that, in no hoſpital appropriated to the reception of venereal patients,

in

in this kingdom, is that medicine adminiſtered as the eſtabliſhed treatment of the houſe: I believe the ſame obſervation is true, when applied to hoſpitals on the continent. When it is therefore conſidered, that a preparation of Mercury ſo eaſily procured; a medicine ſo much more deſirable for common uſe than the mode of treatment by inunction; and, what forms a proper object of attention in all hoſpitals, a remedy of little expence, compared with the external application of Mercury; when, I ſay, notwithſtanding theſe advantages, it is little uſed, and ſcarcely ever relied on, in caſes where the conſtitution is affected, may we not infer from theſe facts, that it is declared, by a kind of general conſent, to be a precarious and undeſirable remedy?

I do not here intend to inſinuate, that the Corroſive Sublimate is never employed; nor to deny that it poſſeſſes any antivenereal powers: I only mean to contend, that it is not, and it ought not to be, confided in, where ſecondary ſymptoms of Lues have appeared; and general practice appears to ſanction this deciſion. If it be inquired, how we are to diſpoſe of the evidence given to the ſuperior virtues

virtues of this medicine, by men of eminence and undoubted probity; I would aſk, what are we to do with the numerous teſtimonies adduced in favour of the Ormſkirk and Tonquin remedies, and of the various other ſpecifics, recommended againſt the bite of rabid animals? Are we to receive with implicit faith, the multiplied evidences recorded by great authorities, of the virtues of Cicuta, Belladona, Arſenic, Vervain, &c. in the cure of Cancer and Scrofula? ——If reſpectable names, or numerous ſuffrages, are to be admitted as unexceptionable proofs in every queſtion of this kind, we muſt expreſs regret, inſtead of approbation, of the labours of thoſe learned moderns, who have expunged, or treated as obſolete, a far greater number of articles of the ancient materia medica than they have retained. The attention of the public is indeed required, almoſt every year, to ſome new medicine of never-failing efficacy; and another year's experience commonly evinces, that the only foundation of its claim to infallibility is, the property of infallibly diſappointing the expectations of thoſe who place confidence in its efficacy.

An

An aqueous ſolution of the Muriated Mercury, mixed with the Syrup of Violets, was formerly given by Profeſſor Boerhaave, in doſes containing $\frac{1}{8}$ of a grain of the ſalt, in many obſtinate complaints; but there does not remain any proof of his having given it in venereal caſes.

Since the time of Van Swieten, Corroſive Sublimate, blended with mucilaginous and ſaccharine matters, has been very frequently employed as an antivenereal remedy, and with ſome appearance of ſucceſs; and, as the mercurial ſalt, when combined in very ſmall quantities with theſe ſubſtances, does not manifeſt itſelf to the taſte, nor can be eaſily detected by the uſual chymical teſts; hence the Sieur L'Affecteur, and other empirical adventurers, have had the audacity to boaſt, of their poſſeſſing a rob, or ſyrup, which, abſolutely containing no Mercury, is nevertheleſs a ſpecific againſt the venereal diſeaſe.*

I have been an attentive obſerver, during many years, of the effects of combinations of mercurial Salts with Syrups, ſuch as may be found deſcribed in the works of Gardane, De

* Med. Comment. Vol. VII. P. 461 and ſeq.

Horne,

Horne, and others; and which are vended by empirics on the continent and in this kingdom, under different titles.* It will be no important conceſſion to allow, that the Gonorrhœa may ſometimes diſappear during the uſe of theſe medicated ſyrups; becauſe this form of the diſeaſe is often ſuſceptible of a natural cure; and it may be alſo granted, that venereal ulcers of the tonſils, and blotches on the ſkin,

* Quelles que ſoient les proteſtations des charlatans, quelque déguiſement qu'ils apportent à leurs remedes, dont ils varient la forme & le goût au grè de leurs intérêts, & de l'opinion publique, on ſait que le ſublimé en eſt preſque toujours la baſe. C'eſt avec ce ſpécifique, ſi dangereux entre leurs mains, qu'ils ne craignent point de préſenter leurs eaux miraculeuſes, leurs ſirops déguiſés, & leurs remedes végétaux, qu'ils aſſurent ne point contenir de Mercure, & qu'ils annoncent comme une découverte qui leur eſt propre, & pour laquelle ils demandent les récompenſes du gouvernement, avec d'autant plus d'aſſurance, qu'ils ont l'art de tromper les plus clairvoyans, & de mêler avec adreſſe à leurs decoctions, ou à la boiſſon ordinaire des malades, le remede qui peut guerir: eſpece d'eſcamotage fort en vogue depuis quelques tems. C'eſt en vain qu'on dévoile ces gens à ſecret, ou qu'on les expulſe, en mettant le public en état de les apprécier: ils ſe reproduiſent preſqu'auſſi-tôt; c'eſt une génération éternelle, que l'avidité fait renaître, pour ainſi dire, de ces cendres.

Obſ. &c. par De Horne. Tom. I. P. 118.

are now and then removed by them; yet, in all the inſtances that have hitherto fallen under my notice, theſe ſecondary ſymptoms have invariably returned.——On the other hand, I have known a three months regular continuance of the Syrup fail of curing recent chancres; in many other inſtances, I have ſeen the diſeaſe proceed in its uſual courſe, as if no medicine whatever had been employed; and, in ſome important caſes, where ſecondary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea were preſent, the moſt patient, expenſive, and perſevering adherence, has not been attended with any real advantage.

It would be foreign to the deſign of this work, to enter largely upon an enumeration of the medical virtues of the Corroſive Sublimate, and of the various circumſtances under which it may be adminiſtered with utility; I ſhall therefore only offer a few obſervations on its powers as an antivenereal remedy.

I am ready to acknowledge the appropriate merits of this preparation, when they agree with evident facts and obſervation; for I am not of the mind of thoſe perſons with whom a medicine is good for every thing, or good for nothing. Any article in the materia medica

medica may be *bonum quoad hoc*, or *malum quoad hoc*, its efficacy being circumſcribed within the lines marked out by actual experience.

When I was firſt entruſted, early in my life, with the care of the Lock Hoſpital, I engaged in a courſe of experiments, to aſcertain the power of Corroſive Sublimate in venereal complaints; and, as I have given that preparation in a great variety of different caſes, both in public and private practice, during the laſt twenty years, it may perhaps be allowable for me to expreſs myſelf with ſome deciſion upon this ſubject.

When the Sublimate is given to cure the primary ſymptoms of Syphilis, it will ſometimes ſucceed; more eſpecially when it produces a conſiderable degree of ſoreneſs of the gums, and the common ſpecific effects of Mercury in the animal ſyſtem. But it will often fail of removing even a recent chancre; and, where that ſymptom has vaniſhed during the adminiſtration of Corroſive Sublimate, I have known a three months courſe of that medicine fail of ſecuring the patient from a conſtitutional affection. The reſult of my obſervations is, that ſimple Mercury,

Calomel, or calcined Mercury, are preparations more to be confided in, for the cure of primary ſymptoms, than Corroſive Sublimate. The latter will often check the progreſs of ſecondary ſymptoms very conveniently; and I think it is peculiarly efficacious in relieving venereal pains; in healing ulcers of the throat, and in promoting the deſquamation of eruptions. Yet, even in theſe caſes, it never confers permanent benefit; for new ſymptoms will appear during the uſe of it; and, on many occaſions, it will fail of affording the leaſt advantage to the patient, from firſt to laſt.

I do ſometimes indeed employ this preparation in venereal caſes; but it is either at the beginning of a mercurial courſe, to bring the conſtitution under the influence of Mercury at an early period, or during a courſe of inunction, with the intention of increaſing the action of ſimple Mercury. I ſometimes preſcribe it alſo after the concluſion of a courſe of frictions, to ſupport the mercurial influence in the habit, in order to guard againſt the danger of a relapſe. But, on no occaſion whatever do I think it ſafe to confide in this

preparation

preparation ſingly and uncombined, for the cure of any truly venereal ſymptom.

I made a ſeries of experiments many years ago, to aſcertain the comparative merits of Mercury merely divided by triturating it with mucilaginous ſubſtances; of calcined Mercury; of Calomel; of the precipitate of Calomel, produced by mixing it with Volatile Alkali; of the pulvis cinereus of Black; of Nitrated Mercury, &c.

The Calcined Mercury, the precipitates of Calomel as they have been called, and the nitrate of Mercury, when given internally, were neither milder in their operation, nor ſuperior in efficacy, to Calomel, or to ſimple Mercury. Indeed, I prefer theſe two preparations to any of the former, as being leſs liable to diſappoint my expectations, by exerting their primary action on the ſtomach and bowels, to the detriment of their more important effects as antivenereal remedies.

When any of the foregoing mercurial preparations were mixed with hog's-lard, and rubbed into the legs and thighs, they neither removed the local ſymptoms, nor affected the general ſyſtem in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time as the Unguentum Hydrargyri. In

other reſpects, I did not remark any important difference in their agency as mercurial preparations.

The ſeveral operoſe and expenſive preparations of Mercury which have had a currency at different periods, as poſſeſſing extraordinary medicinal properties, are generally falling into diſuſe: for it is now commonly underſtood by men of ſcience in our profeſſion, that *what* we give, is of leſs importance than *how* we give it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of MERCURIAL FUMIGATION.

THE practice of expoſing the body to Mercury in the ſtate of Vapour, is nearly of the ſame date with the diſcovery of the anti-venereal qualities of that mineral. It was uſual, at that early period, to mix Cinnabar with various gums and aromatic ſubſtances, to which they often added Arſenic, combined in different proportions with Sulphur: thus injuring the health, and endangering the life of the perſon they undertook to cure.*

Sunt igitur Styracem in primis qui, cinnabarimque
Et Minium, & Stymmi agglomerant, & Thura minuta,
Quorum ſuffitu pertingunt corpus acerbo,
Abſumuntque Luem miſeram, & contagia dira:
At vero & partim durum eſt medicamen & acre,
Partim etiam fallax, quo faucibus angit in ipſis
Spiritus, eluctanſque animam vix continet ægram.
Quocirca totum ad corpus nemo audeat uti,
Judice me: certis fortaſſe erit utile membris,
Quae Papulæ informes, Chironiaque ulcera paſcunt.†

* Aphrodiſiacus.
Parallele des Traitemens. Chap. V.

† Syphilis Hieron. Fracaſtorii. Lib. II. P. 38. 4to.

The miſchievous conſequences which often reſulted from the injudicious uſe of Mercurial Fumigations, gradually leſſened the reputation of this mode of treatment, and, in courſe of time, nearly aboliſhed it. A new mode of fumigating was then introduced, in which the body was expoſed to the vapour of Spirit of Wine; this was deſigned principally to promote ſweating; and the diaphoreſis was ſupported during ſome hours, by the aid of warm coverings, and the exhibition of large quantities of Decoctions of the Woods. But, while the fumigation of the whole body was performed by Spirit of Wine alone, Mercury, in a ſtate of vapour, was applied topically, in caſes of ozaena, ulcers of the throat, ulcers of the ears, venereal excreſcences, &c. and with evident advantage.

In the year 1736, an empiric, of the name of Charbonnier, appeared at Paris, profeſſing to uſe mercurial fumigations after a new mode, equally ſafe and ſucceſsful. He was permitted to ſelect ſome patients in different hoſpitals, for the ſubject of his experiments; and the progreſs and effects were ſuperintended by the phyſicians and ſurgeons of the reſpective inſtitutions. Many perſons really affected

affected with Lues Venerea were undoubtedly cured by this man; yet it muſt alſo be admitted, that he failed in ſeveral inſtances; and what is ſtill more important, a greater proportion of people died under this mode of treatment, than when Mercury was adminiſtered in the uſual manner.

The practice of general fumigation with Mercury, being on theſe accounts diſcountenanced by Aſtruc, and by many of the principal practitioners in Europe, was nearly abandoned a ſecond time, when M. Lalonette publiſhed, in 1776, what he called, a new method of treating the venereal diſeaſe by fumigation. The preparations which this author recommends to be employed as fumigating powders, are analogous to Calomel, and Hydrargyrus cum Creta; and, inaſmuch as no ſulphureous vapours ariſe during the proceſs of combuſtion, theſe ſubſtances may be preferred to Cinnabar, or Æthiop's Mineral; but, on the ſcore of real efficacy as mercurial preparations, it is not eaſy to explain how far they merit a preference.* The fumigating machine

* M. Lalonette is not the firſt perſon who was ſenſible of the diſagreeable effects of ſulphureous vapours, and who

machine is indeed a very convenient one, but it is no novel invention, as the author pretends; for the plate given by M. Lalonette, differs in no material circumſtance from that publiſhed by Nicholas de Blegny, in the year 1683.

In the years 1786 and 1787, having procured a fumigating machine, conſtructed according to the directions given by M. Lalonette, I made a conſiderable number of experiments, to decide on the comparative advantages of this method, and the common practice of inunction. I found that the gums became turgid and tender, very quickly; and that the local appearances were ſooner removed than by the other modes of introducing mercury into the ſyſtem. But, to counterbalance theſe advantages, I obſerved, that it induced a conſiderable debility in a ſhort ſpace of time; that a ptyaliſm was often excited rapidly, and at an early period; and that, conſequently, I was often obſtructed in purſuing ſteadily a

who propoſed methods of obtaining the beneficial effects of Mercury, by combining it with other ingredients.—Thierry de Hery gave formulæ for this purpoſe, more than two hundred years ago. Methode Curatoire. P. 170.

courſe

courſe of treatment, which operated ſo powerfully on the animal frame.*

The concluſions I deduced from my experiments were the following:—That where checking the progreſs of the diſeaſe ſuddenly is an object of great moment, where the body is covered with venereal ulcers, or where the eruptions are large and numerous, ſo that there ſcarcely remains a ſurface large enough to abſorb the ointment, the application of the vapour of Mercury, will be always attended with evident advantage. But, in addition to theſe remarks, I think it right to ſubjoin, that it is extremely difficult to introduce a ſufficient quantity of Mercury into the animal frame, in this way, ſo as to ſecure the patient againſt the hazard of a relapſe; I therefore conſider it as a mode of treatment by no means eligible in general practice.

The vapour of Mercury, when applied to venereal ulcers, to fungi, and excreſcences,

* Thierry de Hery, who publiſhed a Method of treating the Venereal Diſeaſe, about fifty years after its appearance in Europe, condemns general fumigations; but recommends topical ones, as ſubſidiary to the introduction of Mercury in another way.

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is a medicament of ſingular efficacy, and merits the confidence of the ſurgeon; but little or no account ought to be made of the Mercury which is thus received into the circulation; for we ſhould never, in thoſe caſes, introduce a ſmaller quantity of the ſpecific by inunction, for the purpoſe of ſecuring the conſtitution, than if no fumigation had been employed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME

EFFECTS OF MERCURY.

IN concluding this part of my ſubject, I will ſubjoin a few practical obſervations, which may probably afford ſome uſeful information to the younger part of my brethren in the profeſſion.

Many perſons have taught, that during a courſe of mercurial inunction, it is unneceſſary to continue the friction until the ointment be abſorbed; and that the ſame medicinal effects will be obtained, by merely ſpreading it over the ſurface of the ſkin, as by the more laborious proceſs of rubbing it in as completely as poſſible. Nothing can be more at variance with truth than this inſtruction; nevertheleſs, a doctrine ſo peculiarly grateful to the feelings of indolent and irreſolute

lute patients, has not failed to acquire conſiderable currency. I do, however, moſt ſtrenuouſly proteſt againſt this ſlovenly and inſufficient mode of applying the ointment; a mode which muſt finally end in the injury of the patient, and the diſgrace of the ſurgeon. But I do not think it ſufficient ſimply to oppoſe ſo deluſive and dangerous an opinion, without urging it as a matter of no inconſiderable importance, that the patient himſelf ought always to perform the friction.

There may be circumſtances indeed, under which an imperious neceſſity may conſtrain the violation of this precept; but, whenever it is infringed, it is always at the peril of the patient's ſafety, unleſs the aſſiſtant conduct it with an accuracy and dexterity which is ſeldom poſſeſſed by thoſe who undertake this diſguſting office. Many inſtances have fallen under my notice, where the ill ſucceſs of the ſurgeon could be manifeſtly traced to this ſource; and where a compliance with the advice I have now ſuggeſted, has been immediately attended with the deſired effect.

Another erroneous notion, which I would controvert, is the opinion maintained by many reſpectable perſons, that free expoſure to the air,

air, during a mercurial courſe, will neither impede the progreſs of the cure, nor diminiſh the efficacy of the ſpecific.

It muſt indeed be allowed, in the firſt place, that of thoſe patients who ſuffer only from the primary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea, a very ſmall proportion reſtrict themſelves from going abroad as uſual; yet, notwithſtanding the liberty they aſſume in this particular, they commonly obtain a radical cure of their complaints, in a moderate ſpace of time.

Theſe acknowledged facts do not however conſtitute any valid objection againſt what I now contend for; namely, that unreſtrained expoſure to a dry cool air, has a powerful agency, in diminiſhing the ſpecific and medicinal virtues of Mercury.

When the venereal virus has produced what are commonly called ſecondary ſymptoms, the attempting to cure a patient without confining him to the houſe, will ſeldom ſucceed. In theſe caſes, the failure cannot always be aſcribed to certain irregularities to which perſons who walk abroad freely are liable; for, where the cloſeſt adherence to rules are in other reſpects obſerved, the effects

fects of Mercury on the conſtitution are commonly feeble, and on the diſeaſe, irregular, unequal, and imperfect. Even in thoſe perſons whoſe ſymptoms are inconſiderable and recent a larger quantity of Mercury muſt be introduced, and it muſt be continued for a longer time, than where excluſion from the open air can be complied with.

I am aware, that particular inſtances may be adduced by every practitioner in ſurgery, of perſons powerfully affected by ſmall doſes of Mercury, who have taken their uſual exerciſe abroad; but theſe exceptions can only point out, what no man needs to be told, that a wonderful diverſity in the operation of Mercury may be noted, in different conſtitutions, and under every variety of regimen.

Mr. Hunter ſeems to have thought, that neither cold, nor warmth, had any material effect on the action of Mercury in the ſyſtem; but he ſuppoſed, that theſe natural agents might have ſome effect on the venereal diſeaſe, in rendering it more or leſs ſuſceptible of the medicinal agency of the ſpecific.*

* Treatiſe on the Venereal Diſeaſe. P. 339.

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If it be well authenticated, that Lues Venerea does not yield ſo kindly to the powers of Mercury, when the diſeaſed perſon is expoſed to the cold air, as when he is confined to a warm apartment, we become poſſeſſed of a rule of practice which ought always to have full influence, in treating that malady. The reaſons that pathologiſts may aſſign for this fact, will probably be various and diſcordant; but, miſconceptions, or difference of opinion, ought not to give riſe to any perplexity in the conduct which prudence ſo clearly dictates upon this occaſion: for, whether the action of the venereal poiſon, or of the remedy employed to cure it, ſuffer an alteration, from expoſure of the patient to the atmoſphere, yet, in order to inſure ſucceſs, the obſtructing cauſe muſt undoubtedly be taken away.

If the ſubject I am now diſcuſſing terminated in a queſtion of mere ſpeculation, the inveſtigation of which had no farther aim than to the ſolution of a problem in pathology, the reader's attention would be ſcarcely recompenſed by a more enlarged inquiry; but, ſince I conceive that the welfare of thoſe who are obliged to uſe Mercury in large quan-

tities, and to continue during a long courſe of time under its influence, is intimately involved in it, perhaps it may not be unacceptable, if I give ſomewhat of a detailed account, of the circumſtances which led me to the concluſion inſiſted on in ſome of the preceding pages.

In the courſe of two or three years after my appointment to the care of the Lock Hoſpital, I obſerved, that in almoſt every year, one and ſometimes two inſtances of ſudden death occurred among the patients admitted into that inſtitution; that theſe accidents could not be traced to any evident cauſe; and that the ſubjects were commonly men who had nearly, and ſometimes intirely, completed their mercurial courſe. I conſulted Mr. Bromfeild and Mr. Williams upon this intereſting ſubject, but they acknowledged themſelves unable to communicate any ſatisfactory information: they had carefully examined the bodies of many who had died thus unexpectedly, without being able to diſcover any morbid appearances; and they confeſſed that they were equally ignorant of the cauſe, the mode of prevention, or the method of treating, that ſtate of the ſyſtem which immediately preceded the fatal termination.

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As the object of my inquiry was of conſiderable importance, I gave a conſtant and minute attention to the operation of Mercury on the conſtitution in general, as well as to its effects on the diſeaſe for which it was adminiſtered; and, after ſome time was elapſed, I aſcertained, that theſe ſiniſter events were to be aſcribed to Mercury acting as a poiſon on the ſyſtem, quite unconnected with its agency as a remedy; and that its deleterious qualities, were neither in proportion to the inflammation of the mouth, nor to the actual quantity of that mineral abſorbed into the body. The morbid condition of the ſyſtem which ſupervenes on theſe occaſions, during a mercurial courſe, and which tends to a fatal iſſue, is a ſtate which, in a former work, I have denominated Erethiſmus;* and is characterized by great depreſſion of ſtrength, a ſenſe of anxiety about the præcordia, frequent ſighing, trembling, partial or univerſal, a ſmall quick pulſe, ſometimes vomiting, a pale contracted countenance, a ſenſe of coldneſs; but the tongue is ſeldom furred, nor are the vital or natural functions much diſordered.

* Principles of Surgery. Chap. I.

When theſe ſymptoms are preſent, a ſudden and violent exertion of the animal power will ſometimes prove fatal; for inſtance, walking haſtily acroſs the ward; riſing up ſuddenly in the bed to take food or drink; or ſlightly ſtruggling with ſome of their fellow patients, are among the circumſtances which have commonly preceded the ſudden death of thoſe afflicted with the mercurial Erethiſmus.

To prevent the dangerous conſequences of this diſeaſed ſtate, the patient ought to diſcontinue the uſe of Mercury; nor is this rule to be deviated from, whatever may be the ſtage, or extent, or violence of the venereal ſymptoms. The impending deſtruction of the patient, forms an argument paramount to all others; it may not be indeed ſuperfluous to add, that a perſeverance in the mercurial courſe, under theſe circumſtances, will ſeldom reſtrain the progreſs of the diſeaſe, or be productive of any advantage.

The patient muſt be expreſsly directed to expoſe himſelf freely to a dry and cool air, in ſuch a manner as ſhall be attended with the leaſt fatigue. It will not be ſufficient to ſit in a room with the windows open; he muſt be taken into a garden, or a field, and live

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as much as poſſible in the open air, until the forementioned ſymptoms be conſiderably abated. The good effects of this mode of treatment, conjoined with a generous courſe of diet, will be ſoon manifeſted; and I have very often ſeen patients ſo far recovered in the ſpace of from ten to fourteen days, that they could ſafely reſume the uſe of Mercury; and, what may appear remarkable, they can very often employ that ſpecific efficiently afterwards, without ſuffering any inconvenience.

This ſimple and ſucceſsful method of managing perſons labouring under the mercurial Erethiſmus, has the ſanction of many years experience; and, in confirmation of its efficacy, I have the pleaſure of ſaying, that I have ſcarcely loſt a ſingle patient from this cauſe, ſince I firſt adopted it.

As Mercury, however cautiouſly introduced into the human body, will ſometimes be determined ſuddenly to the mouth, producing ſevere inflammation, ulceration, and the other diſagreeable attendants of a copious ptyaliſm, the acquiring of a medicine which poſſeſſes the power of ſpeedily and ſafely removing a ſalivation, has always been a great deſideratum with ſurgeons.

Various remedies have been recommended for this purpoſe, with ſtrong aſſurances of their efficacy; ſuch as, Purgatives, Nitre, Sulphur, Gum Arabic, Lime Water, Camphire, Peruvian Bark, Sulphurated Kali, Bliſtering Plaſters, &c. yet I ſuſpect, the reputation of theſe ſeveral articles, reſts upon the baſis of a ſcanty and inadequate experience. I do not preſume to urge, that the medicines juſt now enumerated, are abſolutely deſtitute of all utility in a ſalivation; but the ſlowneſs with which the beſt of them exerts its good qualities, and the manifeſt futility of the greater part of them, deſtroy all confidence in their power to remove the ſerious inconvenience complained of.

The ſpeedy and deciſive advantages reſulting from free expoſure to the open air, during the mercurial Erethiſmus, induced me to try whether the ſame treatment would not confer an equal benefit on thoſe who were ſuffering from a premature or exceſſive ſalivation.—Common prejudice has indeed, during a long time, proſcribed expoſure to the cold air, as being certainly injurious to thoſe who are under the influence of Mercury; and the inflammation

flammation of the gums, cheeks and tongue, is, even at this day, frequently attributed to what is called a cold, as the exciting cauſe of it. Theſe apprehenſions are, however, ill-founded; for, although freely expoſing the perſon to cold and moiſture, or to heat and moiſture, during a mercurial courſe, may be generally conſidered as improper, yet the aggravation of the inflamed ſtate of the mouth, the ſupervention of rheumatic pains, &c. ought not to be attributed to pure atmoſpheric air, but to the water contained in a foggy or damp atmoſphere. The good effects of this practice juſtified my expectations; for I obſerved, that the breathing of a cool, dry air, was no leſs beneficial than pleaſant, to a perſon affected with ulcerated cheeks and gums; the animal ſpirits were likewiſe recruited, and the health ſo much improved, in the courſe of a week or ten days, that the patient was generally capable of returning to the uſe of his medicine again.

I have, accordingly, during many years, conſtantly directed thoſe patients who have been ſuffering from this cauſe, to lay aſide all coverings of the face; to go out in a carriage

with the windows open, and when at a proper diſtance from town, to alight and walk in the fields as long as their ſtrength would permit. Their apartments ought likewiſe to be well ventilated; no more fire ſhould be kept than the ſeaſon of the year may render abſolutely neceſſary, and the perſon ſhould live in the open air as much as poſſible. Not a ſingle inſtance has yet occurred to me where the leaſt indiſpoſition was occaſioned by this mode of treatment; and the certain advantages attending it, are ſuch as can only be properly eſtimated by thoſe who have often employed it.

In recommending free expoſure to air, I do not intend to preclude any other ſubſidiary means, which peculiar circumſtances may indicate, or render eligible; ſuch as, cathartics at due intervals; the Peruvian bark and mineral acids; with the aſſiduous application of aſtringent and other ſuitable gargles. The moſt material objection which I foreſee againſt the method of treatment I have recommended, is the hazard to which the patient will be expoſed, of having the ſalivation ſuddenly checked, and of ſuffering from ſome other diſeaſe in conſequence of it.

That

That the haſty ſuppreſſion of a Ptyaliſm may be followed by ſerious inconveniencies, has been proved by Dr. Silveſter,* who publiſhed three caſes of perſons who had been under his own care; two of whom were afflicted with violent pains; and the third, ſcarcely retained any food in her ſtomach, for the ſpace of three months. I have ſeen not only pains, but even general convulſions produced from the ſame cauſe. But this ſingular kind of *metaſtaſis* of the mercurial irritation, does not appear to me to owe its appearance to ſimple expoſure to cold and dry air; becauſe I have known it occur in different forms, where patients continued to breathe a warm atmoſphere, but uſed a bath the water of which was not ſufficiently heated. Cold liquids taken in a large quantity into the ſtomach, or expoſure of the body to cold and moiſture, will alſo commonly prove extremely injurious to thoſe who are fully under the influence of Mercury; whereas, breathing a cool air, while the body is properly covered with apparel, has certainly no tendency to produce any diſtreſſing or dangerous conſequences.

* Medical Obſ. and Inquiries. Vol. III.

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If, however, a ſuppreſſion of a Ptyaliſm ſhould be occaſioned by any act of indiſcretion, the remedy is eaſy and certain; and conſiſts only in the quick introduction of Mercury into the body, ſo as to produce a ſoreneſs of the gums; with the occaſional uſe of a hot bath.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

ON THE USE OF ACIDS

IN

LUES VENEREA.

SINCE the time when the ſcience of chymiſtry began to be cultivated with ſucceſsful diligence, and an enlarged and more correct knowledge of the properties of bodies has been acquired by experiments wiſely imagined, and ſkilfully conducted, frequent attempts have been made, though with unequal ſucceſs, to apply the principles of that uſeful ſcience, to the phenomena of diſeaſe, and the operation of remedies. When a great number of hypothetical notions are ſucceſſively propoſed, upon ſubjects at the beſt imperfectly underſtood; when ſyſtems are conſtructed upon ſcanty and fallacious obſervations, and are chiefly ſupported by doubtful analogies; it may be naturally expected

pected, that such productions of the fancy will partake of absurdity, or error; or at the best, will present nothing to the mind but undiluted obscurity.*

Those who, with Sylvius † and his followers, contended that the venereal virus was an acid, very consistently denominated Mercury an alkali, and interpreted the ratio medendi of that mineral according to the doctrines of chymical affinities; and, agreeably to these notions, absorbents and alcohol were considered as useful topical applications. On the contrary, the advocates for a predominant alkali being the source of Lues Venerea, directed acids to be given as the true antidote; hence, they "sometimes ordered their pa-"tients to eat six large lemons daily, besides

* Jacobus Vercellonus de Pudendorum Morbis.

Disputatum est, utrum acidi, an alcalici, an salini, an putridi generis sit, mihi quidem postremum videtur esse verisimillimum. Kempe Dissertat. P. 11.

† Opera Franciſci Deleboe Sylvii. Tract. III. De Lue Venerea.

Mercurius Compitalitius. Art. III. P. 512.

Joan. Muys Praxis Medico-Chirurgica.

Lemery Cours de Chimie, &c.

"good

"good ſtore of verjuice at their meals."* But, into whatever incongruities individuals have been ſeduced, whether by current prejudices, by erroneous principles, or by the miſapplication of right ones, ſtill ſome advantages have commonly accrued to medical ſcience; for, either the ſources of former miſtakes have been detected, or unexpected and uſeful diſcoveries have been accidentally made. There can ſcarcely therefore, be any thing more weak and inequitable, than to contemn and diſparage a ſcience, becauſe a ſmall number of its profeſſors have ſometimes diſcovered in the courſe of their inveſtigations, the extremes of indiſcretion, ſelf conceit, or temerity. How long, or to what extent the principles and practices now alluded to prevailed in the world, are inquiries which form no part of the deſign of this work. It may ſuffice to obſerve, that the application of chymiſtry to medicine in the preſent period, has been conducted with an evidence and a ſuc-

* Turner's Syphilis. Ed. V. P. 33.

Med. Tranſactions, Vol. I. A mechanical account of the operation of Mercury, by Dr. Barry.

ceſs,

ceſs, which the firſt promoters of that ſcience ſcarcely knew how to wiſh for.

It is probable, that the Vegetable Acid is the only medicine of that claſs which has been employed as a ſpecific againſt Lues Venerea, till towards the cloſe of the preſent century; but, to what extent it was introduced into practice, cannot now be aſcertained.

About thirty years ago, an Italian empiric pretended to poſſeſs an infallible ſpecific, which contained no Mercury. At the requeſt of ſome perſons of high rank, he was permitted to adminiſter his noſtrum to certain patients in the Lock Hoſpital; and it had the fate which all other noſtrums commonly meet, when their virtues are ſubjected to the ſcrutiny of men who are qualified judges of the ſubject. When the medicine was afterwards examined, it was found to conſiſt chiefly, if not entirely, of the eſſential oil of lemons.

It was, during many years, the practice of the ſurgeons of that hoſpital, to order the patients to eat a certain number of Seville oranges, or lemons, every day, when ulcers from a venereal cauſe became ſtationary, or untractable; and evident advantages were derived from this treatment. Domenico Cirillo

Cirillo has likewiſe ſpoken in the higheſt terms of the efficacy of this claſs of remedies, in obſtinate venereal complaints.*

During the laſt two years, I have paid particular attention to the powers of theſe Vegetable Acids in venereal caſes; but I have not witneſſed a ſingle inſtance in which they proved competent to the removal of any one venereal ſymptom. The health of the patient has been indeed ſometimes improved by the uſe of them; but the diſeaſe was neither ſuſpended in its progreſs, nor meliorated in its appearance.

A man afflicted with a venereal ſore throat, placed himſelf under the direction of a gentle-

* Ma tutti queſti ajuti ſono da riguardarſi come preſſo a poco inerti, ſe ſi paragonano all'efficacia dell'acido vegetabile, al quale biſogna dare il nome di medicamento ſpecifico per la guarigione delle piaghe veneree, cagionate da Lue antica, e da exceſſive doſi di Mercurio introdotte nel corpo. Non un ſolo caſo di queſta natura ho veduto eradicativamente curato per mezzo dell'uſo continuo de'Limoni, Aranci, o pure colle larghe bevute di aceto. Nè biſogna limitare l'uſo de'Limoni, ma convien permettere anzi ordinare agl'Infermi, che per guarire prontamente nè facciano abuſo.

Oſſervazioni Pratiche, &c. P. 168.

man,

man who profeſſed to have great confidence in this remedy. The patient took lemon juice, and the juice of Seville oranges, during many weeks, and I ſaw him frequently while he was purſuing this courſe. The virus however proceeded in its ravages, without any ſenſible interruption, till the bones of the noſe becoming affected, the patient very prudently deſpaired of deriving advantage from a longer continuance of the Vegetable Acid, and had recourſe to the uſe of Mercury.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the VITRIOLIC ACID.

THE Vitriolic Acid, mixed with hog's-lard, has been frequently employed, during the laſt fifty years, as an ointment againſt the Scabies, and ſome other cutaneous affections;* and the ſame Acid, diluted with ſpirit, or water, has been often adminiſtered internally with great ſucceſs, in ſome diſeaſes of the ſkin.†

I have made great uſe of the Vitriolic Acid in cutaneous diſeaſes, during the laſt twenty years; and have alſo thought proper to give it to various perſons afflicted with the Lues

* This medicine was employed in the Pruſſian army, in 1756, and an account of the ſucceſs which attended it, was publiſhed by Dr. Helmich, in a work intitled, Diſſertatio de Olei Vitrioli uſu in quibuſdam Scabiei Speciebus. It is likewiſe mentioned by Baldinger, in his Treatiſe on Army Diſeaſes.

† See a paper publiſhed by Dr. Carmichael Smyth, in the firſt volume of the Medical Communications.

Venerea; not indeed with the expreſs intention of curing that malady, but with a view of remedying certain inconveniencies which were obſtructions to the uſe of Mercury. Theſe incidental occurrences have furniſhed me with various opportunities of obſerving the changes it is found to produce, in venereal ſymptoms, the moſt material of which I ſhall proceed to deſcribe.

When a bad ſtate of health prohibits the immediate introduction of Mercury into the body; or when the appearances are too equivocal to warrant a prompt deciſion on the true nature of the diſeaſe, and more eſpecially, if dyſpeptic ſymptoms, attended with profuſe perſpirations, harraſs the patient, and exhauſt his ſtrength; the Elixir of Vitriol will commonly remove theſe ſupervenient ſymptoms, and give a temporary check to the progreſs of the diſeaſe; nevertheleſs, the virus will ſoon proceed in its deſtructive courſe, even under the conſtant exhibition of the acid. I have often ſeen the Elixir of Vitriol, given in the quantity of two drams a day, evidently arreſt the progreſs of venereal ulcers of the tonſils: and ſometimes venereal eruptions will fade and nearly diſappear, during the uſe of it;

theſe

theſe apparently beneficial effects however are never permanent. I do not mean to affirm merely, that the ſymptoms will recur when the acid is diſcontinued; but that the diſeaſe will make a certain and manifeſt advance, at the very time in which this medicine is given in as large doſes as the ſtomach ought to receive it.

There are circumſtances however, wherein the Vitriolic Acid will confer actual and durable benefit; as in thoſe ulcers of the penis, of the groin, and of the throat, which ſometimes remain nearly ſtationary, after the power of the venereal virus has been completely ſubdued by Mercury. I have adminiſtered the Peruvian Bark, Sarſaparilla, and other medicines of ſimilar qualities, in ſuch inſtances, without gaining the leaſt advantage; whereas, on diſcontinuing theſe, and having recourſe to the Elixir of Vitriol, in as large doſes as would agree with the ſtomach, the ulcerations have ſpeedily healed.

I have likewiſe found this acid very efficient in counteracting the troubleſome ſymptoms produced by Mercury, when it has been determined too powerfully to the mouth. When the ptyaliſm is accompanied with ulcer-

ation of the tongue, of the cheeks, or of the tonſils, on ſuſpending the uſe of Mercury, and exhibiting this acid three or four times a day in water, a more ſpeedy amendment is obtained, than by the exhibition of any other article of the materia medica with which I am acquainted.

Some accounts have been lately publiſhed, tending to prove the antivenereal virtues of the Vitriolic Acid; and, if the theory propoſed by ſome ingenious men, of the modus agendi of acids in this diſeaſe, be correct, it might be reaſonable to look for ſuch qualities in it, according to the rules of analogy. The experience of many years, has however been ſo little favourable to expectations of this kind, that I have not thought it neceſſary to make any farther experiments with this medicine.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Of the MARINE ACID.

THE advantages which may be derived from employing the Marine Acid, in Lues Venerea, both as a medicine capable of ameliorating the appearance of venereal ulcers, and of reſtraining for a time the progreſs of the diſeaſe, have been obſerved by me during many years. I was firſt induced to give this acid in venereal ulcers of the tongue, and of the throat, in conſequence of the great benefit which had reſulted from my uſing it in the Cancrum Oris; and, although I did not view it as an antidote againſt Lues Venerea, yet I have frequently availed myſelf of its uſeful qualities, where it has been deſirable to gain a little time, previouſly to the entering on a mercurial courſe.

I will recite two caſes, for the purpoſe of illuſtrating its agency under the circumſtances which I have ſtated.

CASE THE ELEVENTH.

A gentleman conſulted me in the year 1796, on account of a ſore throat which had reſiſted all the common remedies, and had been ſuppoſed, by ſome who inſpected it, to be of a cancerous nature. The tonſils were much enlarged, and were deeply and extenſively ulcerated. From the mere appearance of the ſores, I ſhould have concluded them to be venereal; but he aſſured me it was not poſſible for him to be infected with that malady. Being in ſome doubt about the real nature of the complaint, I ordered eight drops of the Marine Acid to be taken in a ſimple vehicle three or four times a day; and directed him to uſe a gargle containing ſome of the ſame acid. The ulcers aſſumed a more clean and healthy aſpect in about ten days; the tonſils ſubſided; and in about three weeks the ſores were perfectly healed. He perſiſted in taking the acid regularly; but, in leſs than a fortnight, and during the time he was employing it, venereal eruptions appeared on different parts of the body, and a very painful node aroſe on the tibia of each leg. As the diſeaſe

diſeaſe now appeared under an unequivocal form, I diſcontinued the acid, and effected a permanent cure, by a courſe of mercurial inunction.

CASE THE TWELFTH.

In the beginning of the year 1796, Mr. ——, deſired me to viſit him: he had a node on the ſhin of the left leg, and venereal ulcers on the uvula, tonſils, and pharynx; his ſtrength was much reduced, his body was greatly emaciated, and he appeared to be in a hectical ſtate. This unfavourable ſtate of his health rendered it improper to employ Mercury; I therefore ordered him to take nutritious aliment, to ſleep in the country, and to take a decoction of Sarſaparilla, with the powder of Peruvian bark. The plan I had ſuggeſted not proving ſo beneficial as I expected, I directed the Marine Acid to be given, as in the former caſe, and ordered him to uſe a gargle acidulated with the ſame. In about ten days, the appearances in his throat were ſenſibly amended; his health was im-

proving, and he gained ſtrength daily; the node on the tibia was not painful, and ſeemed to be ſtationary. When the ulcers in his throat were nearly healed, and during the time he was ſteadily purſuing this plan of treatment, venereal blotches appeared upon the ſurface of his body; and, ſoon afterwards, the ulcers in his throat began to ſpread anew. As the reaſons for deferring a mercurial courſe no longer exiſted, and the diſeaſe was evidently gaining ground, I directed him to employ a courſe of mercurial inunction, by which he obtained a permanent cure.

The beneficial conſequences which I had often remarked, from the uſe of the Vitriolic and Marine Acids, in venereal caſes, were ſufficiently obvious to engage my attention; but I never inferred from ſuch inſtances as are recited in the foregoing pages, that theſe acids could radically cure the venereal diſeaſe. I was accuſtomed to aſcribe the advantages which were derived from theſe medicines, partly to their ſalutary effects on the ſtomach, and conſequent improvement of the health of the patient, and partly to their agency as local applications.

As

As the Marine Acid is leſs grateful to the ſtomach, I do not preſcribe it ſo frequently, in ulcers forming the ſequelæ of a venereal taint, as the Vitriolic Acid; but, where I have directed it by way of experiment, I have not been ſenſible of any ſuperior medicinal efficacy which the latter poſſeſſed over the former.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the NITROUS ACID.

IT was my intention, about two years ago, to collect and publiſh a hiſtory of the effects of the Nitrous Acid in Lues Venerea; ſome circumſtances intervened, which prevented me from executing my deſign at that time; and, ſince that period, the public has received ſo much information on the ſubject,* that I find it expedient to contract my views, and to deviate conſiderably from my original plan.

The firſt account of the powers of the Nitrous Acid in venereal caſes, was publiſhed by Mr. Scott, at Bombay, in April 1796: and the papers ſent to the Right Honourable Sir Joſeph Banks on this ſubject, were tranſmitted to me, by the polite attention of Dr. Gray, Sec. R. S. ſoon after their arrival in

* See the publications of Dr. Beddoes, Dr. Rollo, Mr. Cruickſhank, Dr. Ferriar, and ſeveral others, on this ſubject.

England.

England. I began to make experiments with the Nitric Acid in the beginning of the year 1797, at the Lock Hoſpital. In the courſe of the years 1797, 1798, and 1799, the Nitric and Nitrous Acids were given to a great number of venereal patients, both in this kingdom and on the continent. Additional communications have likewiſe been ſent by Mr. Scott from India: nevertheleſs, I am not ſure, that the power of this medicine in Syphilis, has yet been aſcertained in ſo ſatisfactory a manner, as to preclude all difference of opinion upon the ſubject.*

It would argue preſumption in me to ſuppoſe, that any thing I can offer, will reconcile the ſeveral diſcordant opinions, or reduce the gentlemen who have made experiments with various ſucceſs, to a parity of ſentiment; yet as the diſcovery of practical truth is, or at leaſt ought to be, the motive of our reſearches, he who joins in the inquiry without partiality or prepoſſeſſion, may hope for a candid attention to his labours.

* Copies of the original letters ſent by Mr. Scott, with a copious collection of intereſting facts on this ſubject, have been publiſhed at different times by Dr. Beddoes.

As

As the publiſhing of a great collection of nearly ſimilar caſes, can be neither neceſſary nor uſeful, when ſuch a multiplicity have already appeared, I ſhall reſtrict myſelf to a ſmall number of inſtances, and ſelect only thoſe wherein I can vouch for the correctneſs of the experiments.

The firſt trials which I undertook with this new medicine, were made with the Nitric Acid; but, as I did not remark any effects in the Nitric Acid, different from thoſe produced by the Nitrous Acid, I commonly employed the latter, in the following manner:

Nitrous Acid, two drams;
Pure water, a pint and a half;
Syrup, four ounces.

This mixture was uſually taken in the ſpace of twenty-four hours. As local applications, I employed a ſaturnine lotion to the ſores; and emollient poultices to tumours, and inflamed parts. All mercurial applications were abſolutely prohibited.

Caſes

Cases in which the Nitrous Acid was given with Advantage.

CASE THE FIRST.

Thomas A. aged twenty-one years, was admitted into the Lock Hospital, under my care, November 16, 1797. He had venereal ulcers on the prepuce, and a phymosis.

Nov. 19th.—He began to take two drams of the Nitrous Acid in the day.

23d.—The sores are cleaner, and have assumed a more healthy appearance.

30th.—The phymosis is better, and the sores begin to heal.

Dec. 5th.—The ulcers are nearly healed. A small, red, painful, and pustular eruption appeared on the trunk of the body, which excited great uneasiness. The pustules suppurated quickly, and on the 11th they had become dry, and desquamation began to take place.

20th.—The ulcers are healed, and the phymosis is quite removed.

He continued taking the Nitrous Acid till December the 30th, when being weary of confinement, and having no complaints, he eloped.

CASE

CASE THE SECOND.

T. Macdonald, aged twenty-five years, was admitted a patient at the Public Diſpenſary, in Carey Street, June the 7th, 1798, with the uſual ſymptoms of a Gonorrhœa. He took the Nitrous Acid during twelve days, when I diſcharged him cured.

CASE THE THIRD.

W. S. a middle aged man, was admitted a patient under my care, at the Public Diſpenſary, May the 4th, 1798. He had a chancre behind the corona glandis, of a month's duration. He took the Nitrous Acid till June the 8th, when he was diſmiſſed cured.

CASE THE FOURTH.

Joſeph Taylor, aged twenty years, was admitted a patient under my care, at the Public Diſpenſary, October the 17th, 1797. —He had two chancres on the præputium, and a ſmall one on the frænum; the præputium was conſiderably ſwollen. This diſeaſe had

had exiſted above three months. He was ordered to take the Nitrous Acid.

October 22d.—The ſore on the frænum is cleaner, and aſſumes a healing appearance.

25th.—The ſore on the frænum is quite healed; thoſe ſituated on the præputium are no better.

He complains that his mouth is very ſore. The inſide of his cheeks look red, and his face is ſwollen, but his gums are neither turgid nor ſore, as when mercury has been taken.

27th.—The ſwelling and uneaſineſs about his face and mouth, have entirely diſappeared. The acid agrees very well with his ſtomach and bowels. The ſmaller ſore on the præputium has begun to heal, but the larger one ſpreads, and is painful.

Nov. 3d.—The ſmall ſore is quite healed; the large ſore is leſs painful, but it has not yet aſſumed a healthy appearance.

10th.—The ſore is conſiderably amended, and begins to heal.

14th.—It is almoſt healed.

He continued taking the acid till Dec. the 26th. The laſt mentioned ſore had been healed full three weeks; although the cicatrix was a little unequal and hard. I deſired him to return

return to me if any ſores appeared again, but I have never ſeen him ſince.*

My friend, Dr. Joſeph Vigarous, from Montpellier, informs me, that he has given the Nitrous Acid with great advantage in the Gonorrhœa. I have not been quite ſo ſucceſsful; for the only inſtance which has occurred in my practice, of its conferring ſpeedy and deciſive benefit in that complaint, is that of Macdonald.

Caſes in which the Nitrous Acid was given without Succeſs.

CASE THE FIFTH.

John Ravard, aged twenty-ſix years, was admitted into the Lock Hoſpital, under my care, February the 25th, 1797. He had a phymoſis; enlarged abſorbent glands in each groin; and his body was covered with a venereal eruption. He was ordered to take the Nitrous Acid.

March 3d.—The phymoſis is better, and the glands in the groin have ſubſided; the

* Theſe are the only caſes in which I have ſeen the Nitrous Acid employed with apparent ſucceſs.

eruption

eruption is paler, and ſeems to be diſappearing from ſome parts.

9th.—He makes a large quantity of urine. The eruption continues to diſappear.

He perſevered in taking two drams of the Nitrous Acid every day, till the 26th of March, when I increaſed the quantity to three drams. The eruption was ſtill viſible, although it had a very pale and faint appearance.

April 1ſt.—The eruption is as vivid, and the blotches have become as numerous, as when he was admitted into the hoſpital. I accordingly directed him to diſcontinue taking the acid, and to begin a courſe of mercurial frictions, by which he obtained a permanent cure.

CASE THE SIXTH.

Sarah Serle, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, October the 7th, 1797. She had chancres, and venereal eruptions; and began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid on the 9th of October.

16th.—The chancres appear cleaner, and ſeem in a healing ſtate; the colour of the

eruptions is leſs vivid. She voids more urine than uſual.

26th.—The eruptions have a very pale appearance; but no deſquamation has taken place.

30th.—The chancres are quite healed; the eruptions have not totally diſappeared.

Nov. 10th.—The ſkin retains the faint mottled appearance which it had on the 30th of October.

Dec. 1ſt.—The eruptions have aſſumed a brighter colour, and freſh blotches are appearing on different parts of her body. She was therefore ordered to take no more of the Nitrous Acid, and to begin a courſe of Mercury. She was diſmiſſed cured, January the 18th, 1799.

CASE THE SEVENTH.

Frances Baldwin, aged fifteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, on November the 3d, 1797. She had enlarged abſorbent glands in each groin, and was directed to begin taking the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 5th.

20th.—

20th.—The tumours are leſs painful, and are much reduced in ſize.

30th.—They continue to ſubſide.

Dec. 7th.—The glands are enlarging rapidly, and have become very painful.

18th.—A ſuppuration has taken place in each groin.

I ordered her to begin a mercurial courſe, and ſhe was diſmiſſed cured, January the 18th, 1798.

The Nitrous Acid ſometimes produced ſickneſs and vomiting, and at other times diſordered her bowels; but theſe inconveniencies were regularly corrected by the addition of opium.

CASE THE EIGHTH.

Elizabeth Taylor, aged twenty years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, November the 9th, 1797. She had a Gonorrhœa and chancres. She began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 10th. The chancres gradually amended; the Gonorrhœa diſappeared; and, on November the 30th, ſhe was free

from any venereal ſymptoms. She was ordered to continue the Nitrous Acid.

Dec. 7th.—The original chancres remain well; but ſome painful ſores appeared near the anus two days ago, which are now evidently venereal; and an abſorbent gland is becoming painful and large in the right groin. She was therefore ordered to diſcontinue the Nitrous Acid, and to begin a courſe of Mercury. On January the 1ſt, the incipient bubo was intirely reduced; and the ſores near the anus were almoſt healed. She was diſcharged cured on January the 25th.

CASE THE NINTH.

Ann Clark, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, November the 9th, 1797. She had a Gonorrhœa, attended with dyſuria urethralis. She began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 12th; and, on November the 30th the Gonorrhœa was conſiderably better, but the dyſuria was not at all relieved. On December the 4th, an eruption, red and painful, of puſtules appeared on the lower

lower part of the abdomen, and inner ſurface of the thighs; and the Gonorrhœa had become worſe than when ſhe was taken into the hoſpital. I therefore diſcontinued the uſe of the Nitrous Acid, and directed the common mode of treatment in its ſtead. She was quite cured on the 28th of December, but eloped before ſhe was regularly diſmiſſed.

CASE THE TENTH.

John Roe, aged thirty-two years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, on October the 5th, 1797. He had an open bubo; the ſcrotum was covered with ſmall foul ulcers; and at the upper part of the thigh there was a large painful ſore, with jagged edges. This man had been under the care of a ſurgeon, and ſuppoſed that he had taken Mercury; but he had not employed any medicine for more than three months before his admiſſion. He began to take the Nitrous Acid, October the 7th.

16th.—The ſores are eaſier, and they exhibit evident ſigns of amendment.

20th.—They improve in their general appearance, and begin to heal.

November 2d.—All the ſores are healed; but I thought it proper to continue the Nitrous Acid.

December 1ſt.—The ulcers remain well; but about two days ago a ſore began to appear upon the ſkin covering the oſſa pubis, which has all the characters of a venereal ulcer.

January 11th.—The ſore has ſpread conſiderably, is very painful, and has an ill-conditioned aſpect. I therefore diſcontinued the Nitrous Acid, and directed him to begin a mercurial courſe.

CASE THE ELEVENTH.

James Thompſon, aged thirty years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, November the 2d, 1797. He had ulcers on the external ſurface of the præputium, and warts on its internal ſurface, and on the glans penis. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, on the 5th of November, and continued it to December the 7th; without the leaſt appearance of amendment,

ment, in either of his ſymptoms. I then ordered him to begin a courſe of Mercury. In fourteen days the ſores were in a healing ſtate; and ſeveral of the warts had ſeparated. He was diſcharged from the hoſpital, cured, on January the 25th, 1798.

CASE THE TWELFTH.

William Southwood, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, November the 2d, 1797, He had a Gonorrhœa; enlarged abſorbent glands in the right groin; and a ſuppurating bubo in the left groin. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 5th.

9th.—The buboes increaſe, and are more painful.

20th.—The tumours in the groins are ſomewhat reduced, and leſs painful.

30th.—The tumour on the right ſide is nearly reduced; and the abſceſs on the left ſide is evidently ſmaller. At this time, a red, painful, puſtular eruption appeared upon the ſurface of the abdomen, ſimilar to that mentioned in caſe the ninth.

Dec. 6th.—The eruption is in a ſtate of deſquamation; but the buboes are increaſing in ſize, and have become more painful.

He was ſo much diſſatisfied with his mode of treatment, that he eloped the next day; although I had promiſed to order him Mercury, in a few days.

CASE THE THIRTEENTH.

Jeremiah Leary, aged twenty-three years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, December the 14th, 1797. He had a phymoſis, and large venereal ulcers on the præputium. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, December the 16th.

21ſt.—The ſores are beginning to amend; and the ſwelling accompanying the phymoſis has leſſened.

28th.—His ſymptoms continue to diſappear.

Jan. 11th.—He appears to be quite well. He complains that his mouth is ſore, and that he ſpits ℔ſs in the day. His gums look red and turgid; but they ſcarcely bear any reſemblance to that ſtate which is produced by Mercury.

29th —

29th.—One of the ulcers has appeared again on the prepuce.

Feb. 1ſt.—The ſore ſpreads rapidly, and has become painful; and the abſorbent glands in one of his groins are enlarging, and have become uneaſy. He was ordered to begin a mercurial courſe; which in twelve days cured his ſores, and reduced the incipient bubo. He eloped from the hoſpital on the 21ſt of February, ſuppoſing himſelf to be well.

CASE THE FOURTEENTH.

John Marr was admitted a patient, under my care, at the Public Diſpenſary, January the 16th, 1798. He received the infection four months before, and had not taken any medicine for it. He has chancres on the præputium; a bubo in each groin; venereal eruptions upon his body; deafneſs, with tinnitus aurium. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, January the 19th.

30th.—The chancres begin to heal; and the eruptions are leſs vivid in their appearance.

Feb. 6th.—The chancres appear to be almoſt healed; and the eruption is diſappearing. The deafneſs, &c. is no better.

13th.—

13th.—The venereal ſymptoms have made no farther progreſs toward amendment.

20th.—The eruptions have become more elevated, and are of a brighter colour, and many more ſpots have appeared upon other parts of his body. The chancres have become painful, and ſpreading; and a phymoſis has come on, attended with conſiderable ſwelling of the præputium.

26th.—All his complaints have evidently increaſed. He was therefore ordered to diſcontinue the acid, and to begin a courſe of Mercury, by which he was cured.

The Nitrous Acid agreed very well with his ſtomach and bowels; and he enjoyed good health during the time of his taking it.

CASE THE FIFTEENTH.

In the beginning of the year 1798, I was conſulted by a gentleman who had undergone three full courſes of mercurial frictions, without obtaining a permanent cure. At the time when I firſt ſaw him, the lower extremity of the tibia of the left leg was expoſed and carious; he had nodes on his forehead,

and

and ſevere nocturnal pains in his bones: As he was in a bad ſtate of health, with a quick pulſe, and was much emaciated, I ordered him to take the diluted Nitrous Acid. He took this medicine during three weeks, without deriving the leaſt advantage, either to his health, or venereal ſymptoms. I then directed a courſe of Mercury to be employed, which entirely removed all his venereal complaints.

The Three following Caſes were communicated by Dr. BAILLIE, *F. R. S. L. & E. late Phyſician of St. George's Hoſpital, &c.*

CASE THE SIXTEENTH.

J. T. aged twenty one years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St. George's Hoſpital, July the 26th, 1797. He had ſevere pains in his limbs, and a large node at the upper end of the tibia of the right leg. He uſed the mercurial ointment during a fortnight after his admiſſion; but, having a great averſion to Mercury, which he

he thought had formerly injured his health, he was permitted to diſcontinue it, and was ordered to take the Decoction of Mezereon. This plan was continued for about five weeks, in which time his pains were greatly relieved, and the ſize of the node was diminiſhed, but neither of theſe ſymptoms was entirely removed. He was then ordered to leave off the Decoction of Mezereon; and he began to take the Nitrous Acid on the 19th of September.*

For two or three days he thought his pains were eaſier, but they ſoon became as ſevere as ever. On the 3d of October, he was ordered to diſcontinue the acid drink, and to rub in mercurial ointment. By the due uſe of Mercury, his pains were removed, and the node diſappeared.

CASE THE SEVENTEENTH.

H. G. aged twenty-five years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St.

* In theſe three caſes, a dram of concentrated Nitrous Acid was mixed in a pint of water. The patients firſt took Lb. I in the day, and gradually increaſed the quantity to Lb. II.

George's

George's Hoſpital, Auguſt the 23d, 1797. He had ulcers upon his penis; a venereal blotch upon one of his arms; and a venereal ſore throat, which had appeared about a month before his admiſſion. He began to take diluted Nitrous Acid on the 23d of Auguſt, and continued it to the 29th of September. The ſores on his penis had healed, but were now open again; the blotch upon his arm was of a fainter colour; and his throat, which ſeemed better during the firſt fortnight, afterwards became worſe. He was therefore ordered to leave off the acid, and to have recourſe to Mercury. After rubbing in the mercurial ointment for nine or ten weeks, he was perfectly cured.

CASE THE EIGHTEENTH.

W. A. aged twenty-eight years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St. George's Hoſpital, Auguſt the 23d, 1797. He complained of pains in his limbs, which were always worſe during the night; he had alſo great tenderneſs of the ſcalp, with a number of ſmall ſwellings on the upper part of the head;

head; there was likewiſe a venereal eruption on the ſkin. He began to take the acid drink on the 29th of Auguſt, and continued it to the 26th of September. During the firſt ten or twelve days in which he was taking the Nitrous Acid, he thought his pains were eaſier; but the eruption, and the ſwellings upon his head, were not at all affected by it. His pains however, after a ſhort time, became as bad as ever; he was conſequently ordered to diſcontinue taking the acid drink, and to rub in mercurial ointment. This courſe very ſoon removed his pains, the ſwellings upon his head, and the eruptions. After having continued the uſe of the Mercury till it was thought he was ſecure from a return of the diſeaſe, he was diſcharged from the hoſpital.

CASE THE NINETEENTH.

Communicated by Dr. MARCET, *Phyſician of the London Diſpenſary.*

Freeman South, aged forty years, was admitted a patient at the Public Diſpenſary, November the 21ſt, 1797. He had a very foul, deep,

deep, ragged ulcer, in the right tonſil; the poſterior part of the fauces on the ſame ſide was ulcerated, and there was another ulcer near the baſe of the uvula. He complained of tinnitus in the right ear; he alſo ſuffered great pain in that part, and on the right ſide of the face, when he ſwallowed his food. He had been married ſeventeen years, was the father of ſeveral healthy children, and he declared that he had never violated the fidelity he owed to his wife. He never had any appearance on his penis reſembling a venereal complaint. He was ordered to take the diluted Nitrous Acid. In leſs than a week the ulcers looked cleaner, their edges aſſumed a florid appearance, and they began to contract. Soon after theſe ſymptoms of amendment had appeared, the ſores ſeemed to become ſtationary; and, after the acid had been continued four weeks, the ulcers became foul again, and began to ſpread.

On the 22d of December, Mr. Pearſon ſaw this patient for the firſt time. He repeated the ſame hiſtory of his diſeaſe which he had given before; but Mr. P. urging him with ſome cloſe interrogatories, he acknowledged that after taking ſome liberties with a woman

woman of the town, a painful pimple appeared on the right angle of his mouth, and that when this healed, his throat became ſore. As the diſeaſe was now making an evident progreſs under a courſe of the Nitrous Acid, he was ordered to diſcontinue it, and to employ Mercury, by which he obtained a perfect cure.

Good Effects of the Nitrous Acid in Ulcers remaining after the Cure of Lues Venerea.

CASE THE TWENTIETH.

James Gingle, aged fifty-one years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hoſpital, September the 21ſt, 1797. The projecting part of the penis was entirely conſumed by a phagedenic ulcer, which was ſpreading ſlowly under the oſſa pubis. This man gave the following account of himſelf;—that he had chancres about eight years ago, and was apparently cured of them: but that ever ſince, he has been ſubject to ulceration of the penis, which has ſometimes healed during

during a ſhort time, and then has appeared again; that he has not had any connexion with women ſince he was firſt affected. His diſeaſe was however generally regarded as venereal, and he had, at various times, employed a great deal of Mercury.

From the patient's narrative, and the general circumſtances of the caſe, I did not conſider it to be venereal; nevertheleſs, as I was deſirous of knowing what effect Mercury would have in this caſe, I ordered him to employ mercurial frictions, and to dreſs the ſore with a carrot poultice. He continued uſing Mercury, from September the 23d to October the 30th; in which time about one ounce and a half of quickſilver was introduced into the ſyſtem, and the ſpecific operation of that mineral was moderate, but ſufficiently evident. At this period the ſore was no better; it ſeemed indeed rather to have increaſed in ſize, and was become more painful.

On November the 1ſt, he was ordered to diſcontinue the Mercury, and to begin to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, continuing the application of the carrot poultice.

6th.—The pain of the ſore is diminiſhed; the diſcharge is leſs, and its ſurface has become cleaner.

9th.—The ulcer continues to amend. As the Nitrous Acid griped him, Laudanum was added to the mixture.

Dec. 7th.—The ſore is nearly healed.

16th.—He was ſo well, that he refuſed to remain any longer in the hoſpital, and went away without my permiſſion.

CASE THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Communicated by Mr. RAMSBOTHAM.*

A young gentleman applied to me in the beginning of February, 1798, on account of a recent, but very foul chancre, which was ſituated on the ſide of the penis, near the oſſa pubis. I ordered him to rub in the mercurial ointment; gave him ſmall doſes of Calomel, with Opium, at the ſame time; and dreſſed the ſore with Ungt. Hydrarg. Nitrat.

* Late of Wakefield, in Yorkſhire, now of Richmond, in Surry.

He

He continued this courſe during ſix weeks; at which time the ſore was almoſt healed, and my patient ſeemed likely to be cured in a ſhort time. Unfortunately Mr. ——, thinking himſelf nearly well, began to neglect his medicines, and omitted applying the dreſſings, in conſequence of which the remaining ſurface of the ſore became dry, and was cruſted over. In about three weeks, the ſore became painful again, began to ſpread, and proceeded gradually over the ſkin covering the right ſpermatic cord, at the upper part of which a ſmall bubo formed. I now gave him Mercury again very freely; and he alſo took a mixture, conſiſting of the Decoction of Bark, Powder of Bark, and Laudanum. To the ſore I firſt applied mild digeſtives, and then a linſeed meal poultice. Notwithſtanding all my efforts, the ſore continued to ſpread, and, about the middle of April, the ulceration had extended itſelf in the courſe of the right ſpermatic cord, diſſecting that part from near the abdominal ring down to the teſticle, and expoſing the teſticle itſelf to view.

The edges of the ulcer were hard and livid; its diſcharge conſiſted of a fetid ſanies, and its tendency to make farther ravages

was but too evident. The Mercury was now diſcontinued, and he took large doſes of Bark, with Opium; he was alſo ſent into the country, where he lived principally on milk. He continued this plan till the 1ſt of May: his general ſtate of health was ſomewhat improved, but there was no favourable alteration in the ulcer. I then accompanied him to Leeds, to conſult Mr. Hey, who, having heard the hiſtory of his diſeaſe, and the mode of treatment, was of opinion that the venereal virus was deſtroyed. He ordered the linſeed meal poultice to be continued; with the addition of a powder compoſed of Pulv. Flor. Chamæm. and Pulv. Cinchonæ, to be ſprinkled upon the ſore; and inſtead of the Bark, he adviſed a preparation of iron, in the form of Dr. Griffith's medicine, to be given; at the ſame time exhibiting Opium in ſuch quantities as to keep the patient eaſy.

The patient followed theſe directions during ten days, without finding any advantage; and, as he did not conſult Mr. Hey again, I gave him forty drops of the Nitrous Acid, in a pint of Decoction of the Bark, daily. The dreſſings were continued nearly as at the firſt; and I directed him to take a pill every night,

night, conſiſting of a grain of Calomel, a grain of Antimonial Powder, and two grains of Opium. In the courſe of a few days, there was a viſible alteration for the better in the ſtate of the ſore; the livid appearance and indurated edges gradually diminiſhed; the diſcharge was more puriform, and his general ſtate of health improved rapidly.

At the beginning of June, the ulcer was much diminiſhed in ſize, and was healing very faſt, when Mr. —— was under the neceſſity of going a journey; he conſequently diſcontinued the Bark and Nitrous Acid; and returned at the end of ſeveral weeks, with the ſore much altered for the worſe, and himſelf in a ſtate of ſerious indiſpoſition. A phyſician was now conſulted, who directed medicines adapted to his ſymptoms; no more Nitrous Acid was adminiſtered; and I left Yorkſhire before this obſtinate diſeaſe had terminated.

During the time that I was employed in making obſervations on the medicinal qualities of the Nitrous Acid in Lues Venerea, I gave

gave it to ſeveral patients who were afflicted with untractable ulcers of the legs; to children ſuffering from the cancrum oris; and in ſome diſeaſes of the ſkin. In many of theſe caſes, it was of no ſervice; and, where any beneficial effects followed the uſe of it, I did not obſerve that it was in any degree preferable to the remedies uſually employed.

When M. Alyon publiſhed his account of the virtues of what he calls *Oxygenated Cerate*, (a compoſition of Nitrous Acid and Hog's-lard,) I immediately procured ſome, and applied it to ulcers, to cutaneous eruptions, and to the tinea capitis. The effects by no means correſponded with the expectations which M. Alyon's language was calculated to excite: it was of ſome ſervice in eruptions attended with pruritus; but it produced no digeſtion on the ſurface of ulcers; and totally failed of curing every caſe of the tinea capitis in which I tried it. Perhaps it may be ſuggeſted, that the Oxygenated Cerate was not accurately prepared: to this I reply, that if M. Alyon's directions be ſufficiently explicit, it muſt have been rightly compounded; there is however an obſcure brevity in his deſcription of the manner

manner of preparing it, which would induce one to ſuſpect that he either purpoſely concealed ſome part of the proceſs, or that he wiſhed the world to believe that he was the only perſon from whom it could be procured in a genuine form.

When the Nitrous Acid is given to patients uſing Mercury, it promotes the appetite, improves the general health, and leſſens the peculiar operation of that mineral on the mouth and fauces, and in theſe reſpects, its qualities reſemble thoſe poſſeſſed by the other mineral acids. Its effects are likewiſe analogous to what are produced by expoſure to atmoſpheric air.

The Nitrous Acid does not, however, as far as my obſervations extend, aſſiſt, or promote the action of Mercury in the cure of Lues Venerea; ſo that the ſurgeon would neither be authoriſed to diminiſh the quantity of that mineral, nor to abridge the time uſually occupied in completing a courſe ſufficient to give permanent ſecurity to the patient.

GENERAL

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

IN concluding this little work, I think it proper to offer the following obſervations, as the reſult of my inquiries into the merits of the ſeveral articles of the materia medica, in Lues Venerea, which have formed the ſubject of the foregoing pages.

1. The Guaiacum, Sarſaparilla, Mezereum, Walnuts, Opium, and Peruvian Bark, have often removed ſome of the primary and ſecondary ſymptoms of Lues Venerea, and have alleviated others. They are likewiſe each of them capable of removing certain ſequelæ of Lues Venerea, where the farther adminiſtration of Mercury would prove injurious. Yet, no ſatisfactory ſeries of evidence can be adduced, demonſtrating that any, or all of theſe vegetables, given ſingly, or combined, are competent to the eradicating of Lues Venerea from the animal body.

2. It muſt be conceded, that certain indubitable ſymptoms of Syphilis have diſappeared, during a courſe of the vegetable remedies; but the ſame ſymptoms have generally recurred,

curred, even at the very time when the patient was taking largely of the medicines which had produced this temporary benefit. Even where the patient has remained apparently well during five or ſix weeks, the diſeaſe has nevertheleſs always returned; and, what is worthy of particular attention, the ſame ſymptoms preciſely have recurred, which had been ſeemingly cured during the adminiſtration of the medicines alluded to. This fact may be conſidered as a proof, that venereal ſymptoms are not cured by them in any proper ſenſe; becauſe local appearances admit of a perfect cure by a mode of adminiſtering Mercury which ſhall nevertheleſs be inſufficient to ſecure the conſtitution.

3. The Muriated Barytes, and two of the Mineral Acids, when given to venereal patients, have the power of ſuſpending, for a limited time, the progreſs of the diſeaſe, and of removing many ſecondary ſymptoms; but they are not equal to the ſubduing of the virus, and freeing the conſtitution entirely from the effects of that deſtructive malady. They may likewiſe be employed with great advantage in thoſe phagedenic ulcers of the

gentials, and of the groin, which may be claſſed among the ſequelæ of Syphilis.

4. The Nitric and Nitrous Acids have removed both the primary and ſecondary ſymptoms of Syphilis; and, in ſome inſtances, it ſeems, that the former have not recurred, nor have ſecondary ſymptoms appeared, at the period they commonly ſhew themſelves, when the cure has been imperfect. But, as far as my own experience extends, and that of many reſpectable friends, who are connected with large hoſpitals, a permanent cure has never been accompliſhed by theſe acids, where ſecondary ſymptoms have been preſent.

The ſame acids, when exhibited with the utmoſt care and attention to many patients labouring under the primary ſymptoms of the venereal diſeaſe, and where they have agreed perfectly well with the ſtomach, have been nevertheleſs, found inadequate to the cure of thoſe ſymptoms. Indeed the failures which have occurred, both in my own practice and that of many of my ſurgical friends, have been ſo numerous, that I do not think it eligible to rely on the Nitrous Acid, in the treatment of any one form of the Lues Venerea.

But

But, while I am obliged thus to detract from the ſuppoſed merits of the Nitrous Acid as an antidote againſt Lues Venerea, I would by no means wiſh to ſee it exploded as a medicine altogether uſeleſs in that diſeaſe.

Where an impaired ſtate of the conſtitution renders the introduction of Mercury into the animal ſyſtem inconvenient, or evidently improper, the Nitrous Acid will be found capable of reſtraining the progreſs of the diſeaſe, while, at the ſame time, it will improve the health and ſtrength of the patient. On ſome occaſions, this acid may be given in conjunction with a courſe of mercurial inunction; and it will be found to ſupport the tone of the ſtomach; to promote the appetite; to determine powerfully to the kidnies, and to counteract in no inconſiderable degree the effects of Mercury on the mouth and fauces. Theſe advantages are by no means unimportant; and certainly entitle the gentlemen who have been active in promoting the introduction of this acid into general practice, to the gratitude of the public.

I will not preſume, however, to aſſert, that we have yet learnt all that can be known, of the beſt mode of exhibiting this medicine; nor will

will I ſuppoſe that we have arrived at the *ne plus ultra* of its virtues. Yet, in the preſent ſtate of our information upon this ſubject, it would by no means be warrantable to ſubſtitute the Nitrous Acid in the place of Mercury, for the cure of venereal complaints; nor to permit the knowledge we have gained reſpecting ſome uſeful properties of the former, to ſeduce us to reject what a long courſe of experience has taught us of the certain efficacy of the latter.

THE END.

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King Street, Seven Dials.

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